

**The War Years in  
Santa Barbara County  
1937 to 1946**

by  
**Justin M. Ruhge**

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**THE WESTERN FRONT**

**The War Years in  
Santa Barbara County  
1937 to 1946**

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*Justin M. Ruhge*

**by**

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Revised and expanded in March, 1989.

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 88-62897

ISBN 0-9614807-5-0

Published by  
QUANTUM IMAGING ASSOCIATES  
Publications Division  
P. O. Box 2216  
Goleta, CA 93118



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A historic research study such as this cannot be accomplished alone. Many persons were very helpful in locating and providing the data for this publication. The author would like to acknowledge those that provided information and the kind help of those that assisted in preparing this book.

Mrs. E. C. Barnes	Permission to use her 8 mm films of the Goleta POW Camp, and information on her husband's involvement.
Mr. J. T. Donahue	Vandenberg Air Force Base, for providing a history of Camp Cooke.
Mrs. Beverly Farr	Typing the manuscript.
G. Allan Hancock Library	History of Captain G. Allan Hancock.
Mr. B. F. Gates	Information on the use of prisoners by the lemon ranchers.
Mr. Harvey Green	Research and photographs, location of ex-German prisoner.
Mrs. Marian Hancock	Providing photographs and history of the Hancock College of Aeronautics.
Mr. O. Holdt	POW camp experiences as a German prisoner.
Mrs. Elizabeth Hvolboll	For use of photos of the remains of the Goleta POW Camp.
Mr. Dennis Jones	Location of 8 mm film.
Mr. W. Mahoney	National Archives, for efforts in locating the camp records.
Mrs. Ruth Pratt	Information on the Japanese attack.
Mr. Bud Rinker	Book cover art and figures.
Mr. Norman Rowe	Information on the use of prisoners by the Walnut Corporation.
Mrs. Ann Ruhge	Editing and review.
Mr. Brent Shiner	For photographs and a drawing of the Santa Maria Army Air Base.
Mr. Edward Walsh	Information on the VMF-422 squadron.



## DEDICATION

Dedicated to the citizens of the County  
whose living histories have illuminated and  
verified the events of the Second World  
War.



## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The Western Front is an outgrowth of discussions with a group of local history buffs regarding the existence of a German prisoner of war camp along Highway 101 in western Goleta. In an earlier book, Goleta Pueblos de las Islas, two chapters dealt with the war years in Santa Barbara County. The Western Front expands each of these chapters and adds the results of new research into the German prisoner of war camp in western Goleta. The origins of Camp Cooke, the P-38 Army Base and the contributions of the Hancock College of Aeronautics to the war efforts are presented in Chapters 2, 9 and 10. Living histories of eyewitnesses to events in those four years of the Second World War are related throughout the book.

Santa Barbara County was a center of war preparation on the West Coast of California and, for a brief interval, literally the Western Front. Before the declaration of war, preparations for war were underway at Goleta and Camp Cooke. The Japanese Imperial Fleet brought the battle to our shores by the attack of its submarine on the oilfields at Ellwood. Marine and Army pilots were trained at Goleta and Santa Maria in the North County, and prisoners of war were kept at camps in several locations in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Many soldiers recuperated from battle wounds at the Hoff Heights General Army Hospital once located on the present Community Golf Course behind the Earl Warren Showgrounds and Loreto Plaza.

Santa Barbara was an R&R port for the fleet and the Army. The open roadstead of Santa Barbara harbor was often the scene of battle groups led by battleships like the Iowa or Missouri.

During the war years, troop trains and freights loaded with tanks, trucks, guns and airplanes steamed north and south through the County on Southern Pacific tracks, guarded by the Army, to show the flag and prevent any attempts at sabotage. Truck convoys rumbled north and south along 101 around the clock.

Several locations on the coast were spotted with 6-inch gun installations, called Panama Mounts, and searchlights. Other coastal spots, such as Naples, were protected by the Army with mobile gun emplacements.

As the war moved farther to the east and west from the United States, the guards and guns were removed. At the end of the war, the prisoners were repatriated and the Marine and Army bases deactivated. The wounded American soldiers were moved to hospitals near their homes or discharged. The Hoff Heights Hospital buildings were torn down or moved to new locations at Pilgrims Terrace to become Santa Barbara City low-cost housing units. The Marine Base became the Santa Barbara



Airport and the University of California campus, and the Army Air Base became the Santa Maria Airport.

Many who were brought to the County by the war returned to live here after the war. At least one German prisoner returned with his family to adopt the Central Coast as his homeland.

The stories of these events are told in the following chapters using published data, records from the National and Military Archives, and personal interviews. The Western Front was compiled to renew interest in and to commemorate those events of the Second World War that have had such a lasting effect on the history of Santa Barbara County.



## Chapter 2

### PREPARING FOR WAR

#### 2.0 Introduction

Years before the Second World War the United States was preparing for a defense if war should come. As war appeared closer on the horizon, the efforts accelerated. At the outbreak of war, plans were turned to wood and concrete in Santa Barbara County.

#### 2.1 Railroad Guns

But first let's look at the period of 1937. The United States had been developing a series of coastal defenses around San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Fort Stevens on the Columbia River. The largest battleships of the major world powers of the day carried 16-inch guns which had a range of about 25 miles. To counter these, the coastal defenses needed to be at least equal in range and better in accuracy. The forts around the large cities and harbors could provide protection to the ranges of their guns, but areas in between were vulnerable.

On the West Coast, rail systems parallel the coast lines in most areas. By the use of mobile railroad guns, many unprotected areas could be covered with the same firepower as at the forts. Two such systems with 14-inch diameter gun bores were built and stationed on the West Coast at Fort McArthur near the Los Angeles harbor (13). Figure 2-1 shows one of the guns being moved in a train. These huge guns needed to be tested and crews trained in their use. The question was, where to test guns without breaking out windows and knocking down the walls of buildings from the shock of firing. The Army picked Don near San Diego and Naples west of Goleta as two lightly populated areas near the ocean.

In the summer of 1937 these two railroad guns were moved into position on the Dos Pueblos Ranch almost in front of the Naples railroad depot where a special siding had been constructed for them. Figure 2-2 shows the area today, a quarter mile south of the county road and just east of the Dos Pueblos tree farm. The Naples depot was located near the trees on the right.

Figure 2-3 shows the guns set up and being tested. In this figure, one gun is being fired while the second is being loaded. In the foreground, film cameras are running to make official Army records for posterity.

Captain Cordrey was the officer in charge of the firings. His eyewitness account is related in the following account (13, 45-48).



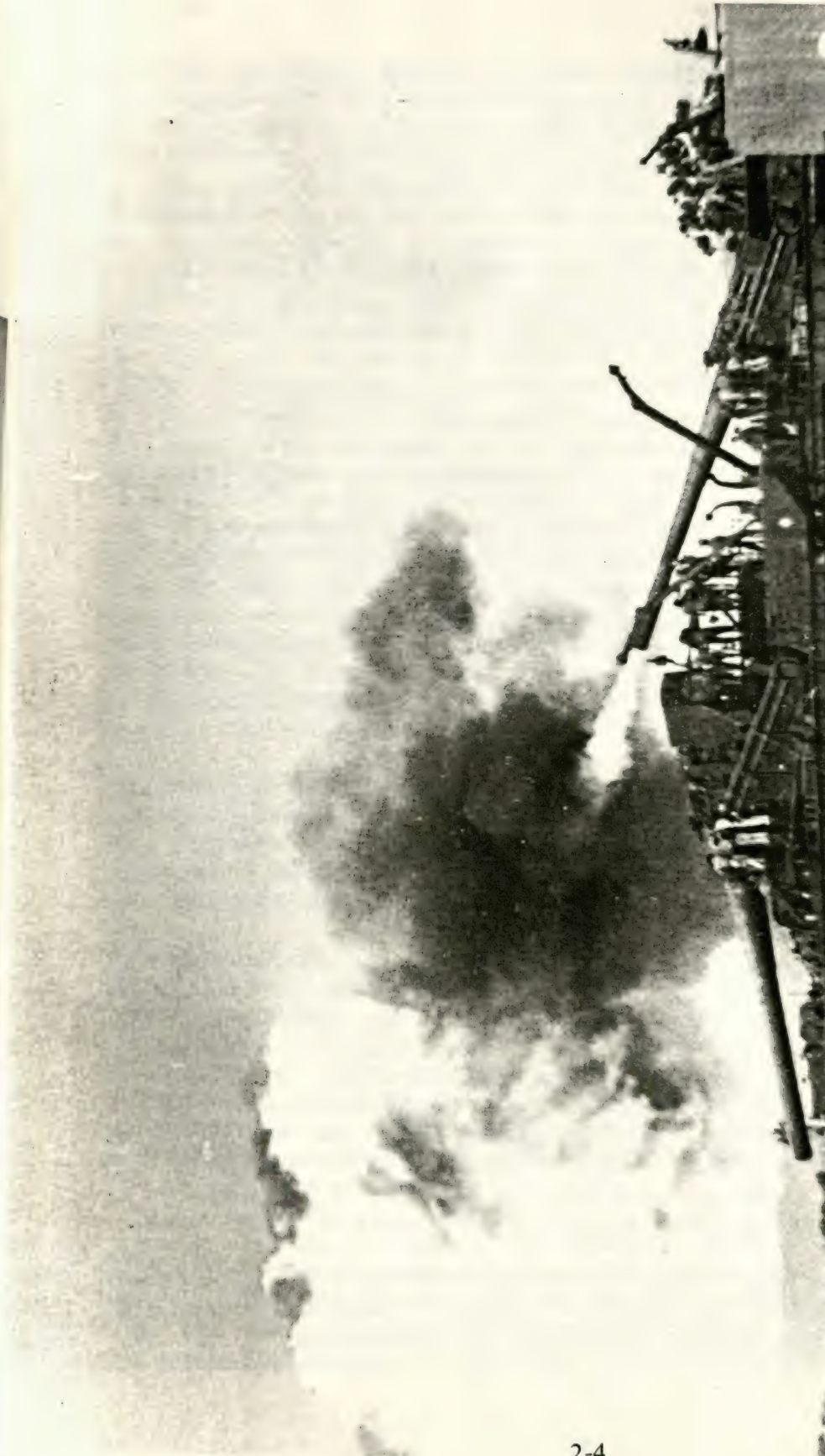


Figure 2-1. 14-inch railroad gun being transported to test site with support train.



Figure 2-2. Photograph of test site in 1987.





2-4

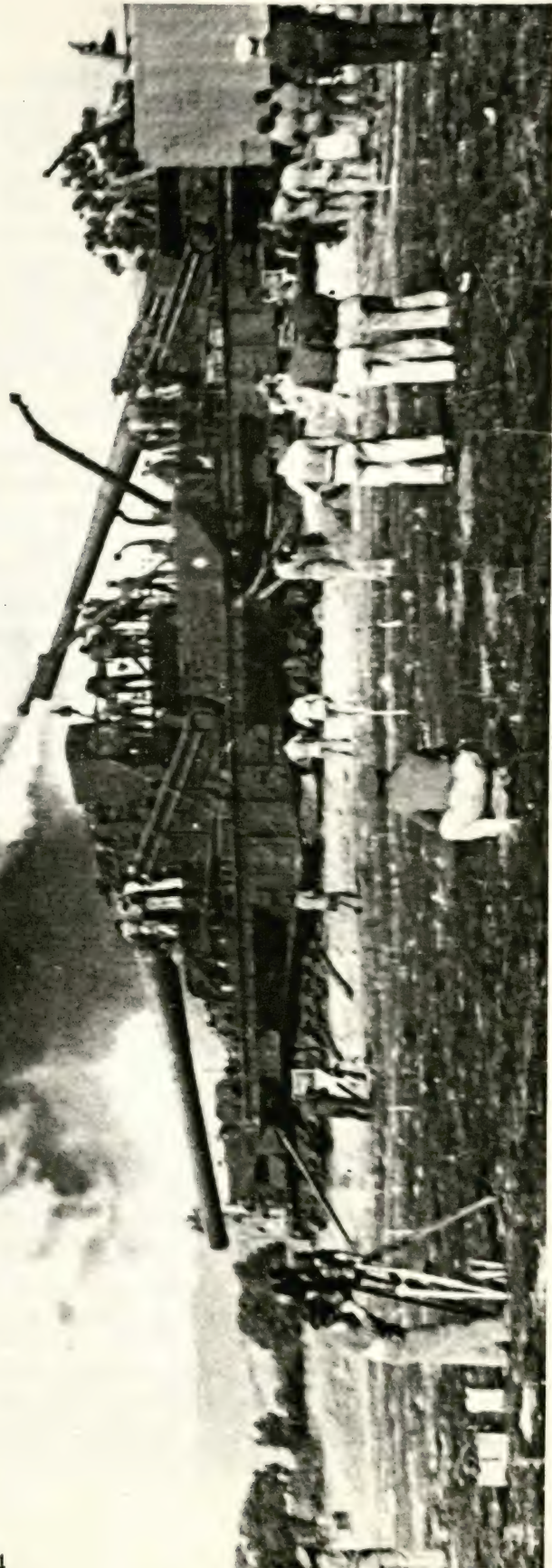


Figure 2-3. Two 14-inch guns being tested at Naples in 1937. Tests were seen in national newsreels.



"In 1937 these two guns were again fired from railroad spurs west of Santa Barbara, California. [The first tests were at Don in 1934.] At that time I was a captain in the reserve cadre and acting adjutant of the 3rd. I was assigned as Battery Commander of one of two shoots and supervised the emplacement. At that time I was the only officer present who had ever seen the guns fired, including the regular officers of the 3rd California and all the visitors from Washington. I received a lot of static from the brass on emplacement technique as I was not going by the book. I had experience, and the book on emplacement was written at the Coast Artillery School by an officer who had never seen such a gun. His emplacement technique was imaginative with a lot of omissions and errors as such programs usually are.

"I was forced to emplace these two guns off Santa Barbara in adobe soil which is very compressive. I did extra shoring for the mushroom recoil pads. I remonstrated to a Washington general that the emplacement was unsafe based on my previous experience with these two guns. Needless to say, a general was not about to listen to a captain, and a reserve on at that, about gun emplacements. I was so concerned for the safety of the crew that I wrote a letter, with certified time stamping, of my fears and prediction that when the gun was first fired, it would topple over on its side, and I further stated in the letter that I was ordered to emplace the guns according to the book by my commanding officer and the Washington general. I figured that when a Board would be called because of an accident, I'd let the higher-ups fry. I delivered this letter to the parties with a copy for myself.

"I was to command the first shoot, and I was ordered by my CO to fire a staggered salvo, which means firing both guns with a one-second time interval between shots. My recommendation against the staggered salvo was disregarded. I alerted the crew to be ready to jump when the electric switch was closed. It was fortunate that the two crews positioned themselves on the guns where they could quickly evacuate.

"When that staggered salvo went off, all hell broke loose. The guns and their carriages, including the body and trucks, jumped a foot into the air. As the weight of several hundred tons dropped back onto the 110-lb rails, it left indentations in the rails ten inches deep at every wheel. The four 6-foot diameter mushroom recoil steel pads and arms flew into the air. Both guns rocked on their foundations to a dizzy angle, but fortunately neither gun fell on its side. The crew yelled and jumped toward what they thought was safety. When the dust cleared, and the guns were calm, I strode from my command post in an adjoining railroad car to the guns and faced my tormentors with glaring eyes. I can easily remember, I was so god-damn mad at high-ranking incompetence!

"It took the crew five days to jack up both guns with locomotive hydraulic jacks to replace the 110-lb rails and rebuild the roadbed so when the gun cars were again dropped on the rails, the guns could be pulled by a locomotive.



"I will say that my CO and the Washington general in charge of the shoot, whose name I can no longer remember, came to me, 'I guess we'll do it your way.' After re-emplacement of both guns in a different location on the rail spurs, we fired about 30 more rounds without incident. One thing was learned from both shoots, always test the soil for maximum compaction before the railroad spur is built. Don't leave the firing location to the railroad."

Shells were fired at San Miguel Island and west on the coast toward the Hollister Ranch. The guns had a range of 25 miles and fired a shell which weighed 1,400 pounds. Water spouts 250 feet high were formed when a shell landed in the water. After these tests, the guns were returned to Fort McArthur where they remained, fortunately, without needing to be used to repel an attack from the sea.

## 2.2 Camp Cooke

Early in 1941 the Army began the development of Camp Cooke as a tank training base. The remote area of Santa Barbara County, now known as Vandenberg Air Force Base, was selected for the new training base. The development of this camp is thoroughly described in A History of Camp Cooke 1941 to 1946 by W. W. Purkiss, written during the war and located in the National Archives (8).

The following excerpts from the book describe better than any the opening of this huge camp eight months before the outbreak of war.

"In March, 1941, when United States was still 'at peace,' when Britain, still punch-drunk from the Battle of Britain, refused to throw in the towel, when the Nazis swept victoriously through the Balkans, when Congress committed our country to the fateful decision of becoming the 'arsenal of democracy' by means of lend-lease, we began to look feverishly to our own defenses.

"In keeping with the new trend in warfare, more and more emphasis was placed on the development of armored forces. New and better training centers for our 'blitz buggies' were sought.

"Military leaders, looking over the country for suitable sites, happened upon the Lompoc-Guadalupe-Santa Maria triangle. Here terrain, ocean and climate conspired to produce a country ideally suited for armored forces. In March 1941, the announcement was made that a military reservation was contemplated in this area. The idea of Camp Cooke was born.

"The first job was to determine the suitability of the area for military uses. The War Department took options on most of the land needed. On May 9, 1941, the preliminary survey to determine the quality of the terrain was begun. The firm of Leeds, Hill, Barnard and Jowett was awarded the contract. Captain C. W. Secord, Construction Quartermaster, represented the military in this pre-spade work.



"By June, the War Department had definitely decided that work was to go ahead. The appropriation for this and several other camps was asked for in Congress on June 5, 1941. Since the passage of the bill was a foregone conclusion, bids for the construction were taken from several contractors. The money for the construction was assured when President Roosevelt signed a \$7,596,948,000 supplementary defense appropriation bill on the 25th of August. Almost simultaneously the construction contract was awarded to the firm of McDonald and Kahn Co. and J. F. Shea Co. of San Francisco. Their bid of \$17,382,670 was the lowest offered. The Leeds, Hill firm was retained as surveying outfit to supervise the construction of the camp.

"In the meantime the War Department started buying the land already optioned. When they were finished, they had purchased 122 tracts totalling 92,000 acres. The size of these tracts ranged all the way from the microscopic to the mammoth, from the L. C. Sanor tract amounting to .009 acre (just a few buckets of dirt!) to the Jesus Maria Rancho of 40,930 acres (about 1,000 times the size of Pa's 'back forty').

"The Jesus Maria Rancho had a long and rich tradition, dating back to the grant of land given to a loyal subject of the King of Spain. It was one of the last strongholds of Old California customs.

"For many years before its purchase by the War Department, it had been owned by the J. R. Marshall family. The area was used largely for grazing, hunting, a few crops (there used to be a field of oats in the present warehouse area)--and dude ranching. 'Marshallia,' now used for officers' homes, was a popular dude ranch before the war.

"Another large tract of land was that of James B. Rogers, son of Will Rogers. (Chapel 5, on Montana near California, was originally known as Rogers Chapel, in honor of the great American gum-chewer-humorist-philosopher.)

"Many of the extremely small tracts were bought in order to secure the right-of-way on the south side of the Santa Ynez River. Another interesting and important purchase was the town of Surf. It was bought from the State of California at a tax delinquent 'fire sale.' Condemnation proceedings were brought against the owners of some 5,000 acres in order to secure their tracts.

"So take 122 pieces of land (Appendix xvii.), fit them together in a huge jigsaw puzzle covering 92,000 acres and you have the Camp Cooke military reservation.

"Why 'Cooke'? The Army in keeping with its policy of naming Army camps after outstanding military leaders, honored General Philip St. George Cooke in christening this camp. (General Cooke lived during the last century.) His outstanding achievement was recorded during the Mexican war, when he led a battalion of Mormon volunteers from St. Louis to San Diego.



"On the 11th of September there was a public dedication ceremony for the camp. Ground was broken for the new project. At that time the Nazi blitzkrieg had made gaping holes in the Red defenses; many so-called experts were freely predicting the early collapse of the battered bear. We were living on borrowed time.

"When one looks over the completed Camp Cooke today, he is likely to say casually, 'Big, isn't it? Must have been quite a building project.' But the deeper one goes into the story of its building, the more one becomes impressed by the fact that the building of Camp Cooke was another one of these engineering 'impossibles' that the American people were compelled to achieve in their grim struggle for survival. Truly here was a great achievement in the face of enormous difficulties.

"At first, it was 'dust, dust, dust!' Fleets of caterpillar tractors swung into action clearing away underbrush and levelling the ground. The fall of 1941 was characterized by some of the strongest winds on record. After a long, dry summer the earth was powder dry. Mix with these the ceaseless plowing of the powerful 'cats,' and you have dust storms which are first cousins to those which made a desert of our midwest dust bowl.

"Howard Cash, who came with surveying party, tells of the weird experience of sitting in his truck with dust swirling so thickly around it that he couldn't see beyond the windshield, listening the the 'cats' plowing by on all sides. One tractor driver left his vehicle at noon when he came off shift; the worker following him wasn't able to find the tractor. The 'cat' was not found till the next morning!

"Later it was 'mud, mud, mud!' With the coming of the rainy season, new problems developed. The hard pan of Camp Cooke terrain is very uneven. The spots where the hard pan falls off were filled with soft earth which gave a deceptively firm impression.

"In the rainy season, these 'potholes' gathered most of the water and the earth took on a glue-like consistency. When anything heavy passed over, it sank as though in quicksand. (Ranchers before the war lost many cattle in these 'potholes'.) The contractors lost their huge tractors. Chester Garrison, of the post engineers, tells of several tractor drivers who had to spring to safety as their tractors slowly sank out of sight in the muck.

"This created one of the major problems which had to be solved before the camp itself could be built. Not only had the ground to be levelled, but it was also necessary to build up a firm base for buildings and motor parks.

"It took sweating, digging, hauling (and cussing) to do the job. Thousands of tons of shale rock were dug out of the countryside, at the many shale pits.



(There is an old shale pit on the side of the back road to Lompoc, at the foot of the big hill.) Fleets of trucks hauled the shale from dawn to dusk. Gradually areas were made ready for building operations. Many of the motor pools on the right side of New Mexico (the road to Surf) have eight to ten feet of shale rock for bases.

"By early October, the German armies in Russia began their huge pincers operation which was aimed at annihilating the Russian armies before Moscow. Hitler announced to his troops: 'Today is the beginning of the last decisive battle ... which ... will annihilate the enemy.' To most of us, it seemed like no idle boast. Time was running out for United States.

"An army of construction workers swarmed over the Burton Mesa and buildings sprang up like mushrooms. At the peak of activity, there were over 4,000 construction workers on the job. They lived anywhere and everywhere; there was a large 'tent city' near the main gate; trailer camps were scattered here and there; many commuted between camp and Lompoc, or Santa Maria, or anywhere one could toss his hat.

"Rain or shine, dust or fog, hell or high water, the work went ahead. Weather at its worst (of course, the weather is NEVER very bad in California--California Chamber of Commerce) did nothing more than delay work momentarily. By October 28, the project was announced as 12 per cent complete.

"In early October the first contingent of the military moved in. The SCU in Camp Cooke was activated October 5, 1941. (It was then known as the CASC, Corps Area Service Command.) The advance party was a group of 11 enlisted men (all NCO's) and one officer, Captain Roswald Smith. This was a signal construction outfit.

"They set up camp in 'Blue Gum Terrace' in a group of blue-gum eucalyptus trees opposite the intersection of Wyoming and Ocean View (Area 14) several hundred yards west of the road. Here then was the SCU's first camp headquarters. Until early November, the staff of headquarters occupied offices in the Chamber of Commerce building in Santa Maria. The Corps Area Engineers had their offices in Rubel Building in Santa Maria.

"At Bluegum they lived the rugged life, bunking in tents, sans hot or cold running water, sans central heating, sans shower baths--but with plenty of cross-ventilation, a nice fresh breeze off the Pacific! The PX set up shop in a small shack called the 'Officer's Club.' There was a combination frame and tent Mess Hall. Cooking was done on an open field range. Mixed with the food were liberal portions of sand.

"All the available water had to be trucked from Lompoc. Hot water for shaving was heated over the open fire. Baths were something out of this world. Passes were issued so that men could go to neighboring towns to take baths. Incidentally the



men found a perfect alibi for overstaying passes. During one of Camp Cooke's infrequent fogs (??!) it would be almost impossible to find one's way back to the area.

"Landmarks were constantly shifting with the rapid advance of camp construction. A bewildering number of paths crisscrossed over the fields. Very confusing! But very convenient for the boy hard-put to explain a few hours AWOL.

"None of the original contingent remains at Camp Cooke, although many will remember Major Peterson, CWO Breton, and M/Sgt Moriarty who left here recently. These three came to Camp Cooke during the first few weeks of its life.

"On October 15, 1941, Lt. Col. John B. Madden assumed the duties of commanding officer. On November 20, the first flag-raising ceremony was held in Camp Cooke, with a eucalyptus tree serving as flag pole. In November Col. Madden moved into the half-completed Headquarters building with his staff. The Corps Area Engineers under Col. Bres moved into the building which now houses Civilian and Military Personnel. In December the enlisted men regretfully (?) left their well-ventilated home in Blue Gum Terrace and moved into barracks in Area 9. By then the detachment had grown to 80 men.

"Incidentally the first building completed in Camp Cooke was the present Supply Building, then occupied by building contractors. The present B & B Studio was then a first aid shack for construction workers.

"In November, building went on apace. So did world affairs. We were still racing against time. The 'final' offensive of the Nazi armies bogged down, ground to a standstill. Russia already was preparing for their first winter counteroffensive. Lend lease no longer trickled across the ocean, it began to assume the proportions of a respectable stream.

"Now time was turning against the Axis. Something had to be done to wreck 'the arsenal of the democracies.' Tension rose in the Far East. Japan occupied Indo-China. The sons of heaven were preparing themselves for world domination--or national hari-kari. Pearl Harbor was brewing."

The history by Sgt. Purkiss covers all aspects of the operations at Camp Cooke throughout the war until 1946. A large map of Camp Cooke accompanies the work.

As if the date was known ahead of time by Washington, every effort was made to be ready by the end of 1941, for war.

### 2.3 Coast Defenses

As a part of the Army's plan of defensive forts around cities and moveable railroad guns, there were also a number of smaller installations on the coast on

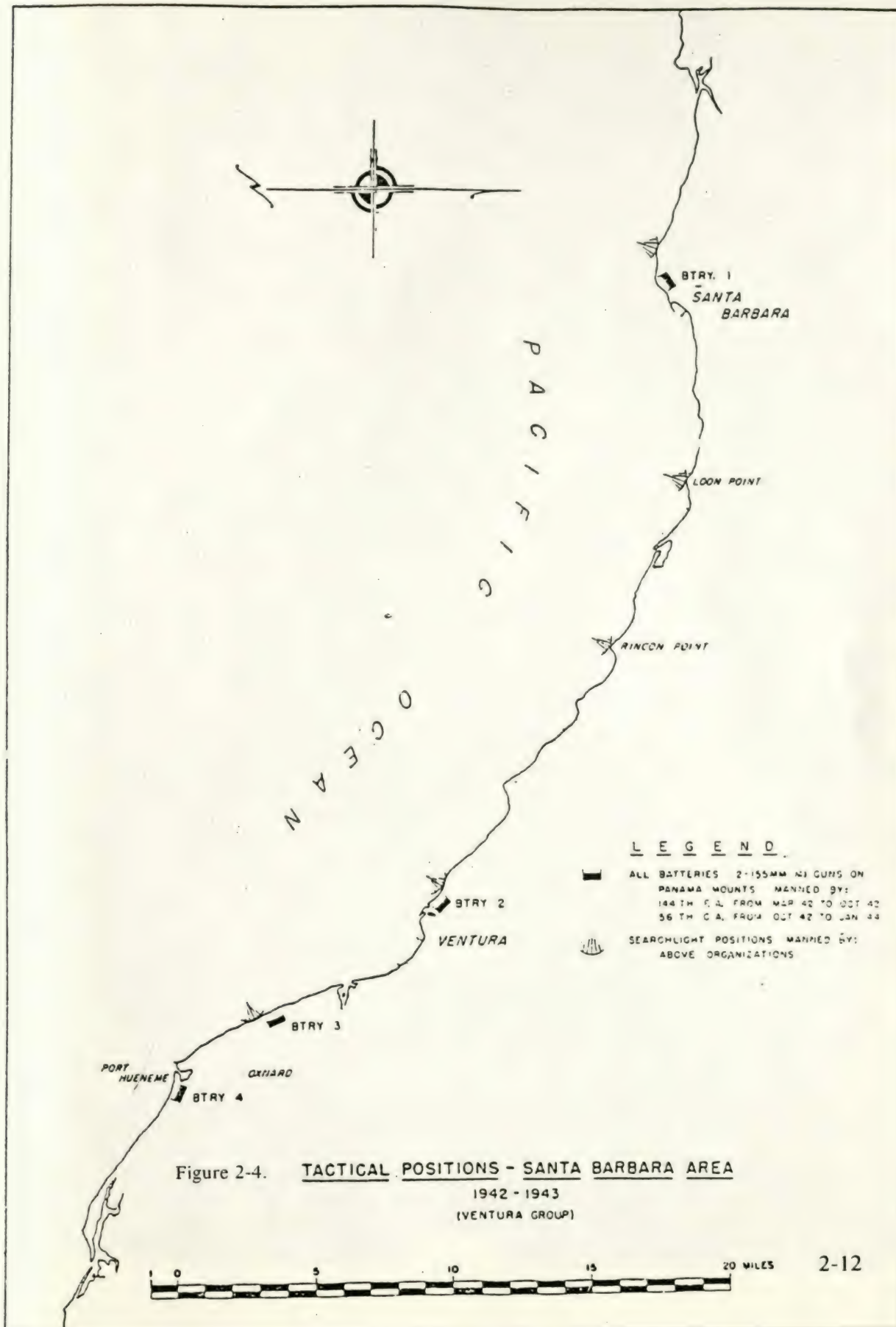


which were mounted pairs of 6-inch guns. These installations were referred to as Panama mounts. These were located at strategic spots on the coast with searchlights to defend the coast against day or night landings.

Between the Panama mounts were located mobile gun camps. One such installation of Panama mounts was on the coast on the west side of the Ventura River opposite Ventura. This installation and others like it are shown in Figure 2-4. The Panama mounts were constructed before the start of hostilities. The concrete structure still exists today. Mobile defenses were located at Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, Ellwood and Naples after the declaration of war.

Santa Barbara County was prepared on the Western Front for defense of the country and for offensive training on December 7, 1941.







### Chapter 3

#### THE JAPANESE IMPERIAL NAVY ATTACKS THE ELLWOOD OIL FIELD

Not since the War of 1812 with the British has the United States mainland been attacked by a foreign power. The only place this has happened since then is at the Ellwood oil fields west of the Goleta town center. For brief minutes 76 days after the declaration of war with Japan, the Ellwood oil fields became the location of the Western Front of the War.

The oil field and its numerous piers are shown in Figure 3-1. The aerial photograph of the area was taken in August 1943. This was one of the largest oil fields in the country at that time. The Japanese submarine appeared at sunset and proceeded west along the coast firing at the shore. [Indicated by the arrow with the (S).] Supposedly, the targets were the oil or gas tanks on the bluffs above the piers. Apparently there was not much danger since, as one can see from a close examination of the photograph, the tanks were empty. The last pier in the line is the Ellwood pier, the only remaining pier today. This pier is shown in Figure 3-2 as it was being repaired after 1983 storms.

There were recorded eyewitnesses to the attack: Americans at a restaurant in the area of the attack, ranchers living in the area and a radioman on the attacking Japanese submarine (6) (15). The attack occurred on February 23, 1942, at 7:00 p.m. at the Barnsdall-Rio Grande Oil Company. The submarine was located 1,500 yards off shore. About 25 rounds were fired. One of the American eyewitnesses was a Mrs. Hilda Wheeler, who operated Wheeler's Inn, a popular restaurant in those days. This establishment was located at the present abandoned gas station, which stands alone near the present Sandpiper Golf Course at the west end of Hollister Avenue. The location of the restaurant is marked with an (R) on Figure 3-1. The gas station is shown in Figure 3-3 as it appears today. Its location on Figure 3-1 is marked with a (G). Barnsdall-Rio Grande Oil Company can be seen today in faded outline on the tower of this station. This was the first station opened by that company in 1929. The oil company was the ancestor of the present day ARCO, headquartered at Bakersfield, California.

The eyewitness at the restaurant was recorded during a radio interview by a Gertrude Polk sometime after the event. The transcript of this interview was found by the author in the Santa Barbara News-Press record files. The comments of the eyewitness are presented here with the permission of the News-Press.

Polk: And you mean to tell us that the impression left by your dream was so vivid, that the attack by the real enemy sub did not surprise you?

Wheeler: That's right, Miss Polk. I had been expecting it for several days--subconsciously, I suppose.





Figure 3-1. 1943 aerial view of Japanese attack site and the path of the submarine along the coast.









Figure 3-3.

1983 photograph of the Barnsdall-Rio Grande gasoline station on western Hollister Avenue.



Polk: Well, what of the people in the dining room and your friend and family with you? What did they think when the explosions came?

Wheeler: I believe at first they thought it might be target practice, but after the second explosion we saw great geysers of mud and dirt shooting up into the air from the cliffs where the shells had struck. Just like the shell explosions in the movies, you know.

The earth shook as it does in an earthquake and the buildings about us rocked on their foundations.

Polk: Surely by this time everybody around the place must have realized what was happening. What was their reaction, Mrs. Wheeler? Was there anything like a panic?

Wheeler: No, there wasn't, Miss Polk, no one seemed even frightened. And that's what I'd like to speak about right now. There was quite a crowd of us, by this time, the people who came out of the dining room, the girls and people who help about the place and motorists who stopped to see what was going on.

I want to speak of their attitude because I believe it is typical of the American public in time of danger. No one seemed to have any fear--just interest and curiosity in watching the scene and of course we were all excited. And then there was a kind of indignation and surprise that anyone would dare to do this thing to us--would dare to shell the United States.

Polk: I think all Americans know exactly what you felt, Mrs. Wheeler. How long did the shelling continue?

Wheeler: The shelling lasted for about twenty minutes. The Japanese gunners soon realized that they were missing their marks so raised their guns and now the shells went whizzing over the cliffs and incidentally almost over our heads.

Polk: Did the sub remain in one position during all of the firing?

Wheeler: No, after the first few shots the sub began to move north [west] firing all of the time and the shell craters were so spaced it looked almost as if a giant had walked along those cliffs.



Polk: Mrs. Wheeler, may we go back again to your dream? It fascinates me--and I remember that in your dream you said the men on the submarine wore strange red suits. Were there any men visible on the real sub and could they be seen from the shore?

Wheeler: Yes, Miss Polk, there were several men seen on the deck of the boat and believe it or not--the observers reported that in the glow of the sunset they appeared to be dressed in red. Just the reflection, I suppose. (At the start of the war, double daylight savings time was instituted. This is why the sailors could be seen at 7:00 p.m. in February.)

Polk: That sounds almost fantastic, Mrs. Wheeler. After the sub had moved north and submerged--what did you do?

Wheeler: Well, by that time the army had taken over. The blackout signals had waived their warnings and the coast was in complete darkness. The President's speech was over--in fact the radio stations were silent. We all felt sort of tired after all the excitement, so we went inside where the only light came from the flame under the coffee urn. We sat and just talked about what had happened and what might have happened.

Polk: Well, thank you, Mrs. Wheeler, for coming to the studio this afternoon and re-living that exciting experience for us. It has given me a thrill--as it has, I am sure, most of our listeners.

Wheeler: Miss Polk, I am grateful to have the opportunity to tell how fine and unafraid our people were and always will be in the face of real danger. Goodbye and good luck to the "Avenge Ellwood" campaign.

The mobile 6-inch gun emplacements at Ellwood had been removed just before the attack. This was Battery A of the 143 Field Artillery. As the attack began, this battery rushed back to Ellwood from Exposition Park in Los Angeles to defend the oil field, but it arrived too late. A detailed account of this activity was also located by the author in the News-Press file.

The type of submarine taking part in the attack was an I class shown in Figure 3-4. A number of these were dispatched to the West Coast of the United States early in the war to harass shipping and attack local installations. Larger submarines actually carried aircraft that were able to fly inland to bomb and start fires (18).



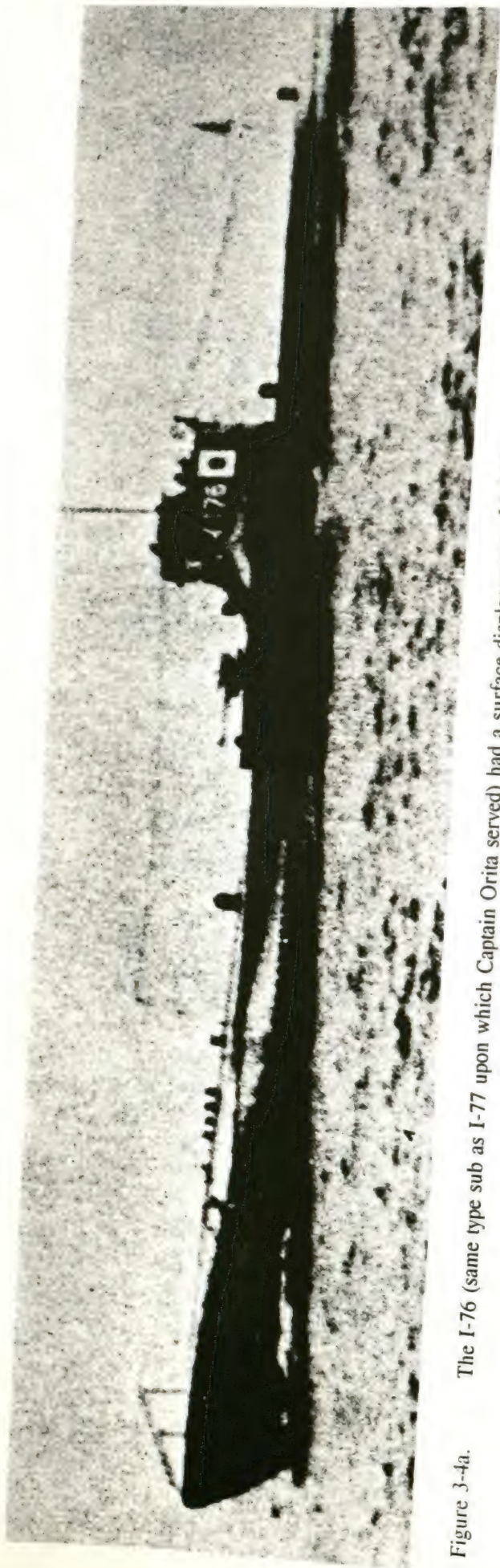


Figure 3-4a.

The I-76 (same type sub as I-77 upon which Captain Orita served) had a surface displacement of 1,630 tons.

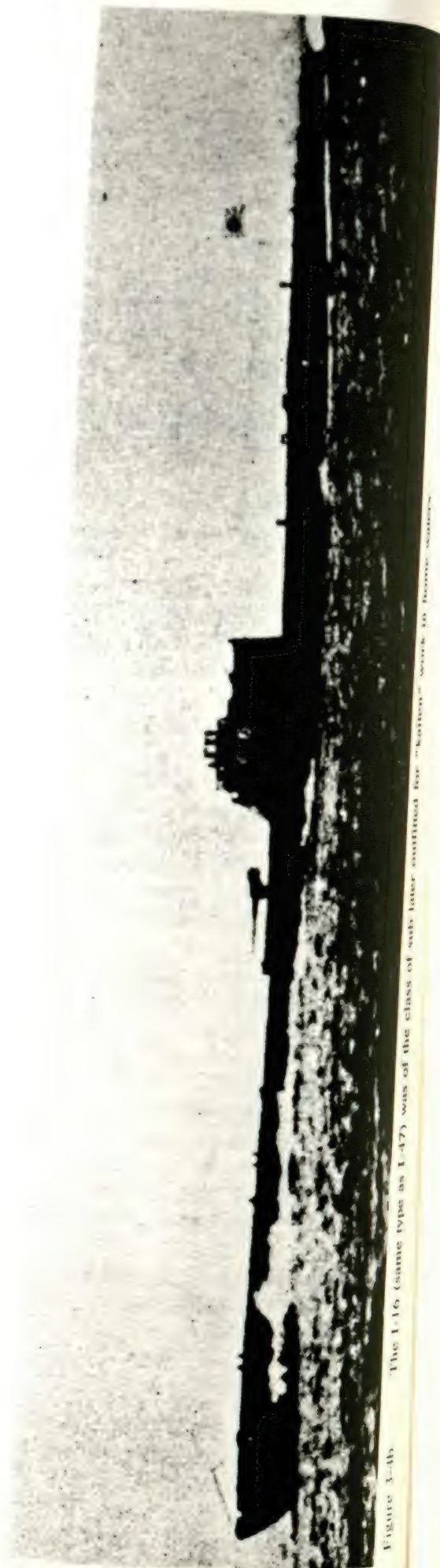


Figure 3-4b.

The I-47 (same type as I-47) was of the class of sub later converted for "Kaituma" service. See "Kaituma" section.



After the attack, the submarine submerged and left the American shores. It was destroyed in a later engagement.

Another eyewitness was the radio man on the Japanese submarine I-17 which conducted the attack. His account is given in I-Boat Captain, published in 1976 by Zenji Orito and J. D. Harrington (6). Seaman Genji Hara's account is presented in the following:

"... Ten minutes later Captain Nishino ordered 'Battle surface! Man the deck gun!' The gun captain had assembled his crew near the hatch earlier. They went on deck. Captain Nishino kept calling out, asking the distance to land and the submarine's depth, giving instructions about the targets. He ordered that shells be fired only at oil tanks.

"Only the gunners were on deck. The rest of us in our 'window-less barracks' could only listen and imagine what it was like above from the sounds and shocks that came through the hull.

"One ... two ... three ... we could imagine the gunners loading each of those rounds; the trainer and the pointer trying to sight on the target. We had counted up to seventeen when the shooting suddenly stopped.

"... 'What did we hit?', I asked them. 'I don't know,' Onodera said. 'I only saw flashes. I had no time to confirm anything.'

"Nagara said it was beautiful and that he could see automobile headlights. The navigator came into the radio room then. 'We started shelling right after sunset,' he said. 'There was no reply until we started speeding away. Some enemy planes dropped flares, but they were far from our position.'

"The reaction set in then. 'We are the first to bombard America!' everyone began telling one another. 'Even if we didn't hit a thing, they know I-17 has been here!' All of us felt like heroes."

Hara states that the attack took place after dark on February 25--and 17 rounds were fired primarily at Richfield oil tanks. This was two days later than the American report. Twenty-five rounds were reported by the U.S. military. Three gunners were on deck, as reported by Mrs. Wheeler. The attack caused great indignation in the U.S. Citizens were urged to buy bonds for fighters and bombers; the national slogan was:

AVENGE ELLWOOD!!



## Chapter 4

### THE U.S. MARINES "FLYING LEATHERNECKS" CHANGE GOLETA FOREVER

When the Second World War started, many training bases sprang up overnight all over California and the Southwest. The weather was reliable, so nonstop training of pilots and aircrews could take place. Goleta was chosen as one of these training bases for the Marine VMSB-244 Dive Bomber Squadron of the "Flying Leathernecks." The history of this organization is summarized in Sharrod's History of Marine Corps Aviation as follows (12):

"MCAS, Santa Barbara. Org. 13 Aug. '42, although the first Marine unit, MAG-24, arrived 14 Jun. '42. Santa Barbara Municipal Airport in Goleta, Calif., selected as site for MCAS and by end of 1942 much of construction was completed. Comm. formally 4 Dec. '42. Advanced each MBDAG-42 arrived 11 Jan. '43 and remained throughout the war. WR's arrived 13 Oct. '43 and 91 joined station Hq. Sq. MBDAG-45 estab. 1 Feb. '44. AWRS-2 formed 1 May '44. MBDAG-48 org. 3 Aug. '44. MBDAG-45 departed overseas 9 Sep. '44. Total of 24 Marine sq's trained at Santa Barbara during war. CO's: Lt. Col. Livingston B. Stedman Jr. 13 Aug. '42 to 29 Jan. '43; Lt. Col. William A. Willis 30 Jan. to 21 Aug. '43; Lt. Col. Chauncey V. Burnett 22 Aug. '43 to 13 Jul. '44; Col. Frank D. Weir 14 Jul. to 5 Dec. '44; Col. Vernon M. Guymon 6 Dec. '44 to date of surrender."

During the War, little consideration was given to the importance of historic sites when they lay in the path of necessity. Already located at Goleta was an airport for Santa Barbara. It was, therefore, possible to expand these facilities rather than start new elsewhere. The expansion of this facility was achieved by filling in the surrounding Slough. This was done by removing most of Mescalitlan Island and part of the bluffs at the present-day University of California, Santa Barbara to be used as fill. By this action, the history and natural appearance of the Goleta Slough was changed permanently. Lost were the many artifacts of the Indian culture on the Island and the pristine nature of the Slough. Lost, also, was the opportunity to make it again, a harbor. The full extent of the Marine Air Base is shown in Figure 4-1. This site plan was prepared by the Eleventh Naval District, San Diego. The site plan was located in an inventory report prepared by the Navy prior to closing the Marine Air Station in 1945 (17). The legend lists all the buildings on the Base. The closeness of most of the Marine Corps operations to Hollister and Fairview is clearly evident and very obvious today when driving through the area. Most of the original buildings around Hollister still exist today. A drive through the University of California campus will also show relics of the Marine Base at that location. There are still many one- and two-story flat-roof buildings with wood siding that look like they should be on some Army base, even though they have been remodeled and painted brown, yellow or white.



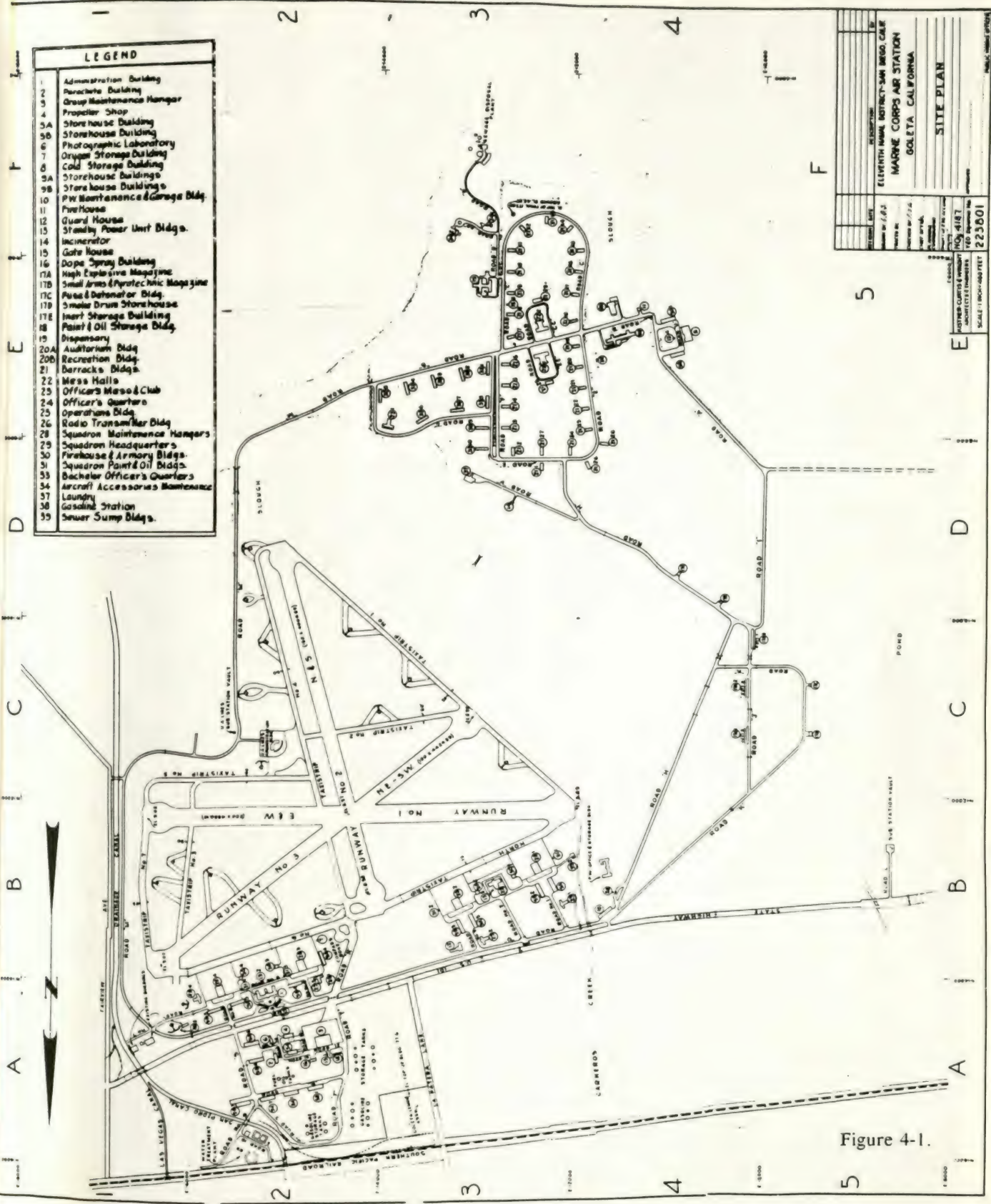




Figure 4-2 shows the actual Marine Base as it appeared on September 22, 1943. To compare Figures 4-1 and 4-2, one or the other should be rotated 90 degrees so the north arrows are parallel. Since Figure 4-2 is also a good photograph of the western part of the Goleta Slough, the dashed lines have been added to show the extent of the original Slough relative to the area of the Marine Base and to present-day Goleta. Portions of the University of California bluffs and Mescaltitlan Island have been removed to form the new Marine Air Station runways. The present location of well-known companies are marked for orientation as follows: "G," Delco Systems of General Motors; "S," Santa Barbara Research; "R," Raytheon; "I," Applied Magnetics (old Burroughs).

Figures 4-3 to 4-6 show the Marine Base in 1943. Figure 4-4 shows the west runway. This runway needed to be added so that the North-South flight path would avoid the Lemon Association buildings on La Patera (15). The new runway is marked by "WR." These four photographs show the Marine Base from various directions and over a period of time. In Figure 4-3 the facilities at the present-day University of California are clearly seen.

Figure 4-6 clearly shows the remains of Mescaltitlan Island, "M." The building which is now the Santa Barbara-Goleta Airport was once the United Airlines Administration Building. The designation appears on the drawing of the Marine Base and also on this photograph, in which the building is marked by a "U."

The human side of the Marine Base was as it is on all military establishments: personnel are trained for war, but much time is spent waiting. During these times, people plan and take part in social and personal improvement activities. To coordinate life on these bases, a paper was often published. At the Goleta Marine Base, this paper was named THE BEAM. Three pages from the last issue published November 16, 1945 are shown in Figures 4-7-A, -B and -C, with its many nostalgic comments and photographs. This issue was obtained from Harvey Green. Other issues are on file at the University of California, Santa Barbara Library, Special Collections.

The television series, "The Black Sheep," was about Pappy Boyington, who trained with his "black sheep" misfits at Goleta.

In 1951, a film was made by United Artists, the Howard Hughes studio, called the "Flying Leathernecks." John Wayne was one of the stars in the film. In it he was supposed to have said, "Now I will have to go back to that damn Goleta." The film describes the Marine pilots who trained during World War II and their subsequent operations in the Pacific Theater of War.

At the end of World War II, Goleta, like most other bases and camps, was disbanded and placed on the war surplus list. The airport was re-acquired by Santa Barbara. The housing part of the Base on the bluffs was obtained by the University of California. Most of the old Marine buildings along Hollister are rented or leased





Figure 4-2. 1943 aerial photograph of Goleta.









Figure 4-4. Aerial photograph showing runway at the Marine Base. "WR" running north and south was added so aircraft could better clear the Lemon Association.









Figure 4-6. Aerial photograph of the Marine Base showing the United Airlines offices, "U."



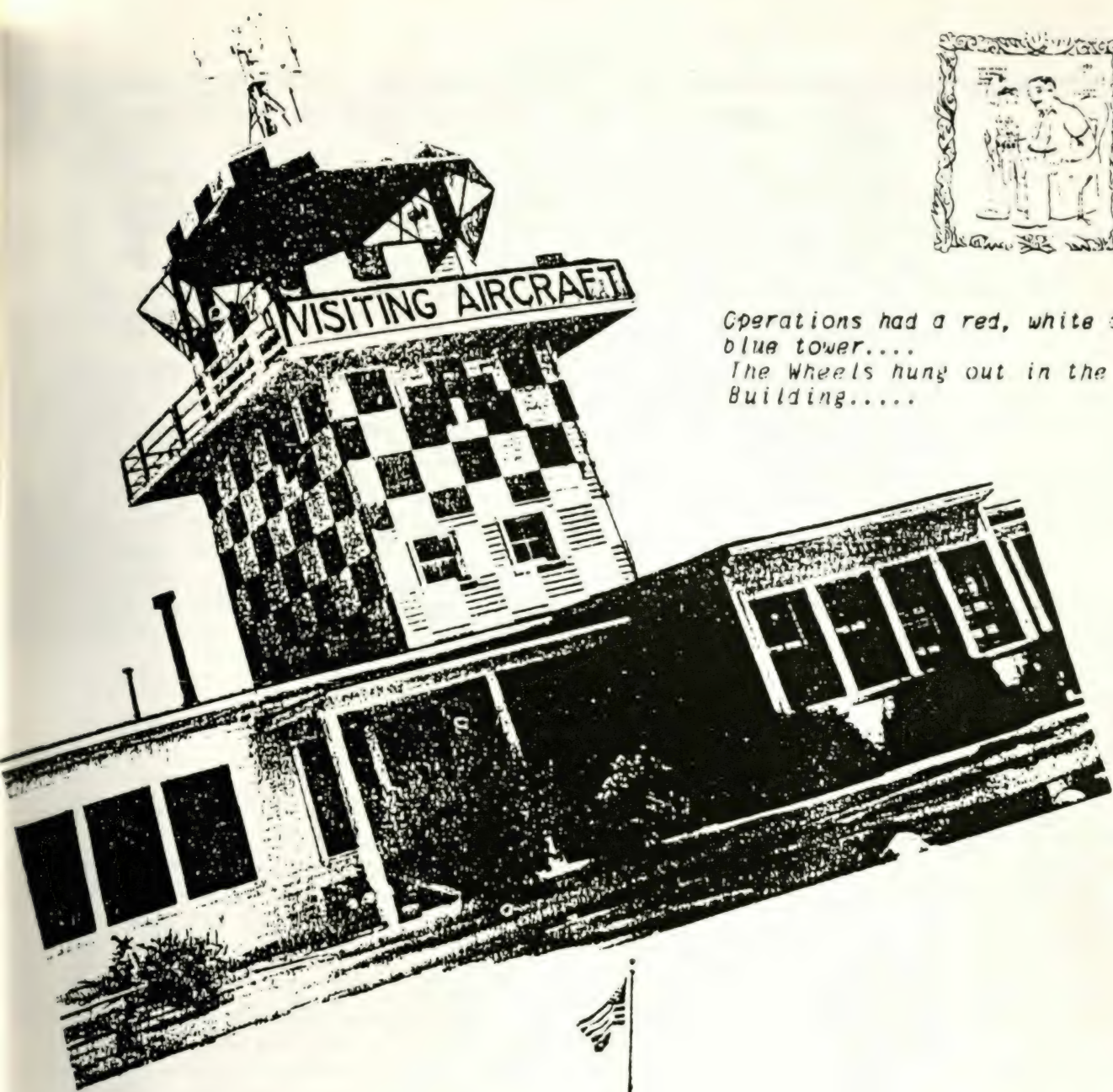
# BEAM



IMCAS SANTA BARBARA GOLETA CALIF

Figure 4-7A





Operations had a red, white and  
blue tower....  
The Wheels hung out in the Ad  
Building.....



Figure 4-7B





November 10, 1943

The BEAM, published Saturday by and for the personnel of MCAS, Santa Barbara, (Goleta), Calif., is paid for by appropriation, and printed on government equipment. Distribution, 2000 copies. The BEAM complies with Ltr of Inst 1100 and uses Camp Newspaper Service material with the permission of CNS, 205 E. 42nd St., NYC.

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1st Lt Doris Ann Neely.....Editor-in-Chief  
Sgt Phyllis Pittroff.....Managing Editor  
PFC Beth D. Clasen.....Feature Editor

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Sgt Mary Nell Stevenson; Sgt J. Grant Halladay  
Photography. Production: Duplication Dept.

## SWAN SONG

With this issue, the BEAM ceases publication. Leaving telephones silent, typewriters covered, and the last story cleared from the 'spike', the staff is preparing for rehabilitation lectures and the journey to home and mother.

The BEAM's many friends are agreed that it was undoubtedly the best paper on the station. At any rate it has come a long way from the crude one-page mimeograph sheet that first appeared in December, 1943, under the editorship of Fred Pasker, who was also sole maintenance man and installationist for Synthetic Training's new Links and 3A2's, movie projectionist, and recreation handyman. In January, 1944, staff and makeup were reorganized, and a 10-page 'Vol. 1, No. 1' appeared with hand-lettered headlines and a story about Brig Gen (then Col) Lawson H. M. Sanderson written by Pvt Robert McKay, who later returned as a second lieutenant and Group S1 public relations officer. Under a new editor, Johnny Hamlyn, the BEAM expanded to 12 pages, added 'Male Call' and 'The Wolf', dressed its pages with mechanically lettered headlines. The staff hung their hats in the narrow waiting room of the Chaplain's old office in the PX, where editorial blasphemies occasionally made it difficult for the good man to invoke heavenly thoughts.

In August, 1944, a Department of Pacific order

suspended publication of the BEAM along with other West Coast air station papers. Two months the staff sweated out re-authorization, putting in time on mess duty and odd jobs. In February '45, Lt Doris Ann Neely, checking in from Edenton, N. C., where she editor-in-chief, the Chomani Leatherneck, gathered the 'Deacons' into a Dallas hut behind the Ad building. After weeks of planning, revising, revamping the mimeograph sheet, the new BEAM appeared in March, printed in Multilith. The first cover color ran on the V-E issue; later, photostatic headlines gave professional polish to the pages. Half-tone reproduction of pictures painfully proved to the point where faces were at least recognizable.

The BEAM's honor roll is crowded with the names of friends who lent assistance, physical or spiritual, in frequent times of trial. The staff is deeply indebted to the Photo Lab, particularly Grant Halladay, who labored over the half-tones this week; to Don Walker, who labored over them the 6 preceding weeks; to Bill Werckenthien and Lou Hutter, who not only made half-tones, rushed prints through, took endless pictures, and assisted in makeup, but provided crying shoulders at the Little Wheels' after work; to George Austin, Chuck Bowen, Bill Tonnies, Harvie Scheetz, Edna Stenbeck, Barbara Cooper, Captain Dogan and Lt Dick Coggins. They are indebted to the girls in Duplicating - Helen Jones, Alma Sanders, Lois Pierce, Agnes Purvis, and Marion Gold - who struggled with the idiosyncrasies of the multilith printer through hectic Fridays and Saturday mornings and through many long evenings; to Helen Butcher and Ida Pillars, who typed and retyped reams of copy; to Bill Helfrich, Tom Oliver, Walt Coppins and Leigh Smith, who wrote masculine sports stories for a feminine, non-sports-minded staff. They thank the artists who filled odd requests at odd moments,.....Phyl Newland, Roma Williams, Barbara Guyon, Doris Fleming, Janice Best and Ray Kalfus who contributed to this week's issue. They're grateful to Lou Hender, who gave technical advice on the printer and supplied one cover; to Lts Bill Gates and Chuck Poe, who before they were called away to the wars, fetched cokes, raised and lowered windows and ran errands; to Group Operations, a never failing source of praise and encouragement; and to the dozens of Marines from all over the station who faithfully wielded the staplers on thousands of copies of the BEAM on Saturday mornings.

The staff hopes that, when you head for home, you will take this edition along as a lasting souvenir of your tour at MCAS Santa Barbara. Thanks for being an appreciative and loyal 'reading public', and.....so long.

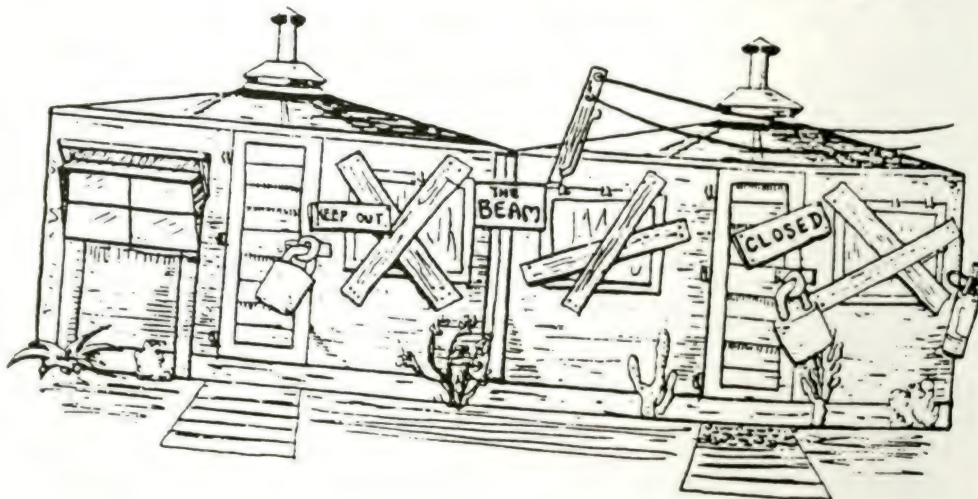


Figure 4-7C



to companies by the City of Santa Barbara. The present Airport Administration Building is the same used by the Marine Air Base administration.

At the end of World War II, most of the members of VMSB-244 fanned out across the country. Most had not had a reason to visit their old base or the Goleta Valley since then. There have been two reunions of personnel trained at Goleta. In 1982 a 40-year reunion of the VMSB-244 was organized. This was the first reunion since the end of World War II. About 50 members and their families returned to Goleta (5).

In October 1988 the VMF-422 squadron with an original strength of 260 men had their 45-year reunion at Goleta. Forty of the original group attended with their wives and relatives. The organizer of the reunion was Edward Walsh of East Meadow, New York.

Figure 4-8 is the squadron group photograph taken in 1943 just before departure for combat in the Western Pacific. The location is in front of Hangar One, still in existence in 1988. The Corsair F4U-1, flown by the squadron, is shown in the background. The group logo, VMF-422 "Buccaneers," drawn by Walt Disney, is seen in the lower middle of Figure 4-8 and enlarged in Figure 4-9.

The VMF-422 was formed on January 1, 1943. The squadron moved to Goleta for training on January 27, 1943. The VMF-422 left Goleta for combat on September 27, 1943.

On January 25, 1944 a group of 23 Corsairs from the VMF-422 were airborne from Tarawa Island to Nanumea Island, Ellice Islands. The group encountered a severe tropical storm which resulted in the loss of all but one of the aircraft. In the ensuing five days, 16 survivors were rescued by Naval search units; one airman was drowned and five more listed as missing.

The first combat patrol was on March 10, 1944. From then on the "Buccaneers" were active in most of the "Island" battles until the end of the war in the Pacific. The details of this story can be found in the VMF-422 Squadron History (14).

In 1948, during the Veterans Day activities for that year, a memorial was erected in front of the Administration Building. This is presented on the back cover of this book. In addition, the letter street names used on the Marine Base were changed. The new names commemorated those airmen that had been lost in action. Twenty-five names were chosen. Seventy men who trained at the Marine Base were lost during the war. Today one sees around the Santa Barbara Airport street names like Firestone, Peres, Hartley and Cook, instead of West A or East B (Santa Barbara News-Press, Monday, November 11, 1985).

On the occasion of the 1988 reunion, the VMF-422 meeting was acknowledged by the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General A. M. Gray. A copy of this message is shown in Figure 4-10.





Figure 4-8.

U.S. Marine Corps photograph of the VMF-422 prior to departure. 1988

Location is at Fanning, Cocos, and Christmas Islands.





Figure 4-9. Logo of VMF-422 squadron.

©WALT DISNEY





12 July 1988

**A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS**

Speaking for all Marines, let me extend my warmest best wishes to the men of VMF-422 as you gather together for your first reunion. Although 43 years have passed since you served our Nation so well in World War II, I'm sure this event will rekindle the same camaraderie and esprit de corps that exemplified your squadron during its time in the Pacific.

From the activation of VMF-422 on 1 January 1943 at San Diego, through operations against enemy forces off airfields on Engebi and Ie Shima, the members of your organization conducted themselves with courage and distinction. With 15 confirmed air-to-air kills and receipt of the Presidential Unit Citation, you should all be extremely proud of your squadron's contribution to America's victory in the Pacific Theater. Your Marine Corps of 1988 is honored to share with you the title of "Marine."

As you meet again with old friends, and take time out to remember those who have gone before, please know our best wishes are with you. Your dedication and fortitude in combat have helped provide the Marine Corps with a reputation for military excellence that is second to none. Semper Fidelis!

A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "A. M. Gray".

A. M. GRAY  
General, U.S. Marine Corps

Figure 4-10.

Message to the VMF-422 from Commandant of the Marine Corps.



At the time of his Marine Corps training, Edward Walsh was 19. Mr. Walsh's stay in the Goleta-Santa Barbara area lasted eight months, but the impressions were enduring. Some of his comments at a recent interview with the author are recorded in the following.

"After seeing California with the Marines, a lot of them stayed in California. They're in all these towns from here [Goleta] to San Diego. Twenty-five per cent of the people who came to the reunion are from California. We formed an organization--it's the first time we've been together since 1945. We're thinking about helping out with a scholarship at the University of California.

"In the days when we were here [1943] the people were lovely. There was gas rationing then and the people couldn't drive far and we didn't have any money. A lot of us were Privates, we got \$50 a month. We would be at the gate here and people would stop and ask, 'where are you going, come with us for dinner,' and we went to Goleta and Santa Barbara and the people were very positive to us. The American Women's Volunteer Service (AWVS) had a storefront down on State Street where all day and into the early evening they had cake and coffee for us. The community donated a jeep to us. It was called 'The Spirit of Goleta.' We used to take the pilots to the ready line and drive them back to the Bachelor Officers' Quarters. I learned to drive a jeep while stationed there.

"When I got here the barracks were up, they were new and very nice. We used to take judo training here. They had a couple of Marine judo experts. Then we would run down to the dock and jump off into the ocean as part of our drill.

"In our day, the bus used to cost a quarter to go into Santa Barbara. I remember going to a dance or a prom at the high school. A lot of girls were in formal gowns in the gymnasium.

"We used to go to the El Paseo to drink zombies. That was the popular drink then. We rubbed elbows with movie stars. Rosalind Russell was there, she was quite a big star. Some of us were restricted to the Base if we had done something wrong, we couldn't have a pass. The Base was wide open, there were no fences. We used to walk into Santa Barbara along the beach. Then coming back the tide was in so we had to swim around all the points.

"I had an experience coming back from Santa Barbara one time. We had to swim around points because the tide had come in. I got a cramp in my leg. It was in the evening and we had been in town all day. I told my partner and he said to lie on my back. We were pretty good swimmers but the tide was taking us out. So I said forget it and I started kicking furiously and got into where there was a big rock in a little cove when a wave hit me. I figured I was gone, but the water kind of cushioned me and I went up over the rock but I never hit the rock. I really thought I was gone. I ended up on the other side of the rock, up against



the cliff, exhausted and full of water. I wouldn't go back in the water but instead I climbed the hill.

"The bunkers are still around. We spent many a night out there, guarding the ammunition. I remember evenings. It was dark out there. The sun would go down and would be right in your eyes.

"There was a perimeter road and the Officers' Mess was up there [on the bluffs at the University of California].

"There were lemon groves on the base. Some of the fellows remember picking lemons on the base.

"We used to have fog every morning. It almost lasted until noontime and they wouldn't let our planes take off. When they did take off, they had to stay away from the mountains. United Airlines used to drop in every day.

"It was a wonderful time. I always have a warm feeling toward this area and my buddies do, too."



## Chapter 5

### SOLDIERS OF THE WEHRMACHT PICK THE GOLETA LEMON

As the Allied armies rolled across Africa and Europe in 1943, hundreds of thousands of German and Italian prisoners of war were taken and placed in local internment camps behind the battle lines. Figures 5-1 and 5-2 are Army photos of the captured Germans and the temporary internment camps that were set up in North Africa. For the long-term duration of the war, however, something more had to be done with these prisoners. They could not all be housed and fed in the area in which they were captured. The U.S. Government decided to move its prisoners to a camp system developed in the United States. The rationale was that the Liberty ships bringing supplies to Europe were returning to the U.S. empty, so why not take back prisoners in them? They could be housed and fed in the U.S. where there was plenty of food and shelter rather than have to move these resources to them in already badly overloaded ships. U.S. Army photographs, Figures 5-3 to 5-5, show the shipment of prisoners to permanent camps in the U.S.

At the outbreak of World War II the Provost Marshal General's Office was assigned the responsibility to make plans to deal with the prisoner problem. In a very short time this organization put together a set of plans that appear simple when compared to the methods of today's government bureaucracy. These are discussed in great detail in "Nazi Prisoners of War" and "Stalag U.S.A" (2) (4). For our purposes, only the highlights of these plans may be outlined:

- o Camps were to be established on existing military posts.
- o Primary locations of the camps were to be in the South and California where minimum demand for building materials or fuel would be made on the war effort.
- o Prisoners were to form their own governments and elect a representative to deal with their U.S. captors.
- o The Rules of the Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War were to be strictly followed.
- o Food and housing were to be equivalent to that of the American soldier.
- o Prisoners were to be instructed in the principles of democracy and the free enterprise system so that when they returned to their countries, they would become leaders in reorganizing their governments. The POW Special Projects Division (POWSPD) under the Provost Marshal General's Office was established for this purpose.





Figure 5-1. Long lines of newly captured German prisoners move to the collection points in the rear areas. (U.S. Army Photo)



Figure 5-2. Some 10,000 German prisoners remain in this enclosure until ocean transports become available to take them to England or the United States. (U.S. Army Photo)



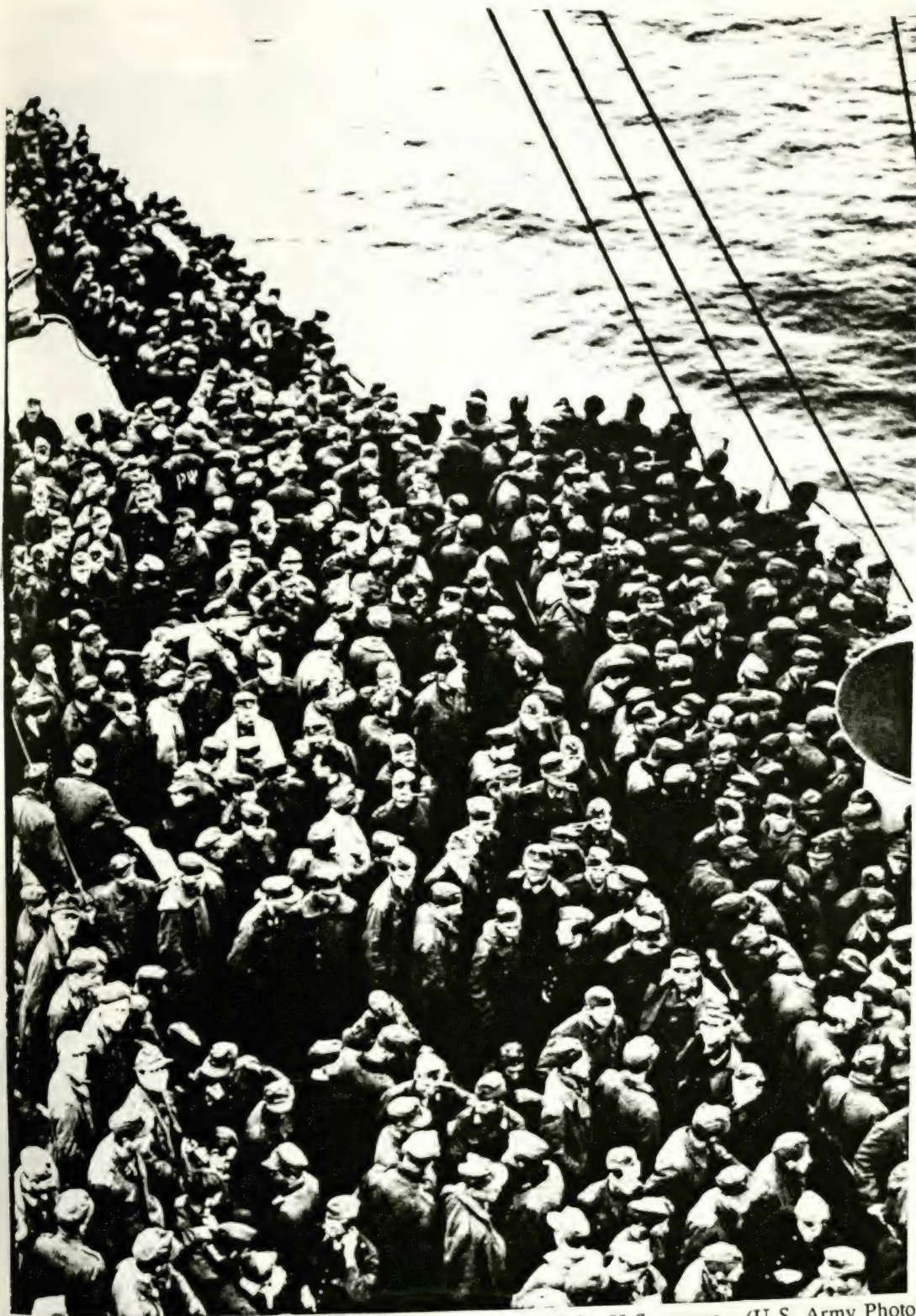


Figure 5-3. German troops on a Liberty ship bound for U.S. camps. (U.S. Army Photo)





Figure 5-4. The German prisoners climb into the trains waiting to take them to their permanent camps. (U.S. Army Photo)



Figure 5-5. A temporary prisoner of war camp at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. (U.S. Army Photo)



- o Classroom instruction, exercises and entertainment were to be offered for mental improvement and maintenance of the physical well-being of the prisoners.
- o Prisoners were not to be given legal currency. Instead, they were to be given credits for their work, which could be used to buy things they may need from the camp PX. Obviously, without money, a prisoner could not go far if he should escape.
- o Prisoners could not be used to make any articles for war.

Figure 5-6 is a map of the U.S. showing the distribution of POW camps in this country. A list is also summarized in Table 5-1. Figure 5-7 shows the typical layout of a major U.S. POW camp.

There were five major camps in California. These were located at Camp Cooke in Lompoc, Camp Angel Island, Camp Beale, Camp Stockton and Fort Ord. The Camp Cooke POW camp is of most interest to us. It was located at the present site of Vandenberg Air Force Base. Nothing remains of the old Army base or the POW camp today. Wesley W. Purkiss, in his book, A History of Camp Cooke 1941 to 1946, located in the National Archives, describes all aspects of Camp Cooke as it existed during WW II. At the end of WW II these extensive facilities located between Lompoc and Santa Maria were acquired by the Air Force (3) (4).

The significance of this study of the prisoner of war camps in California, other than its obvious historic value, lies in the real effect that the prisoners had on the State's economy during the war years. California is primarily an agricultural state where a lot of labor-intensive crops are grown. With the outbreak of war, the able-bodied farmers and farm laborers were pressed into service to defend their country. Without these people, the crops could not be planted nor harvested. Therefore, the injection of new sources of labor was needed. The German and Italian prisoners, who could do the work and generate income for the Army, were a ready solution to the problem. Their work paid for the camp facilities, returned a profit to the Army and actually cost the farmer less than regular ranch hands.

Since large prisoner of war camps could only place prisoners near a relatively small number of farms, the Branch Camp system was developed so that the labor could be located where it was needed. Due to the great importance of the branch camp to the state economy, and the large number and wide distribution of these camps, they are the center of focus of this story. In particular, the Goleta Branch Camp was chosen because it was one of the earliest established, it was a typical example and, of course, it was near the author's center of interest.

Exposing the prisoners to the American way of life to counteract intensive Nazi brainwashing was the goal of the American POWSPD. The branch camps helped



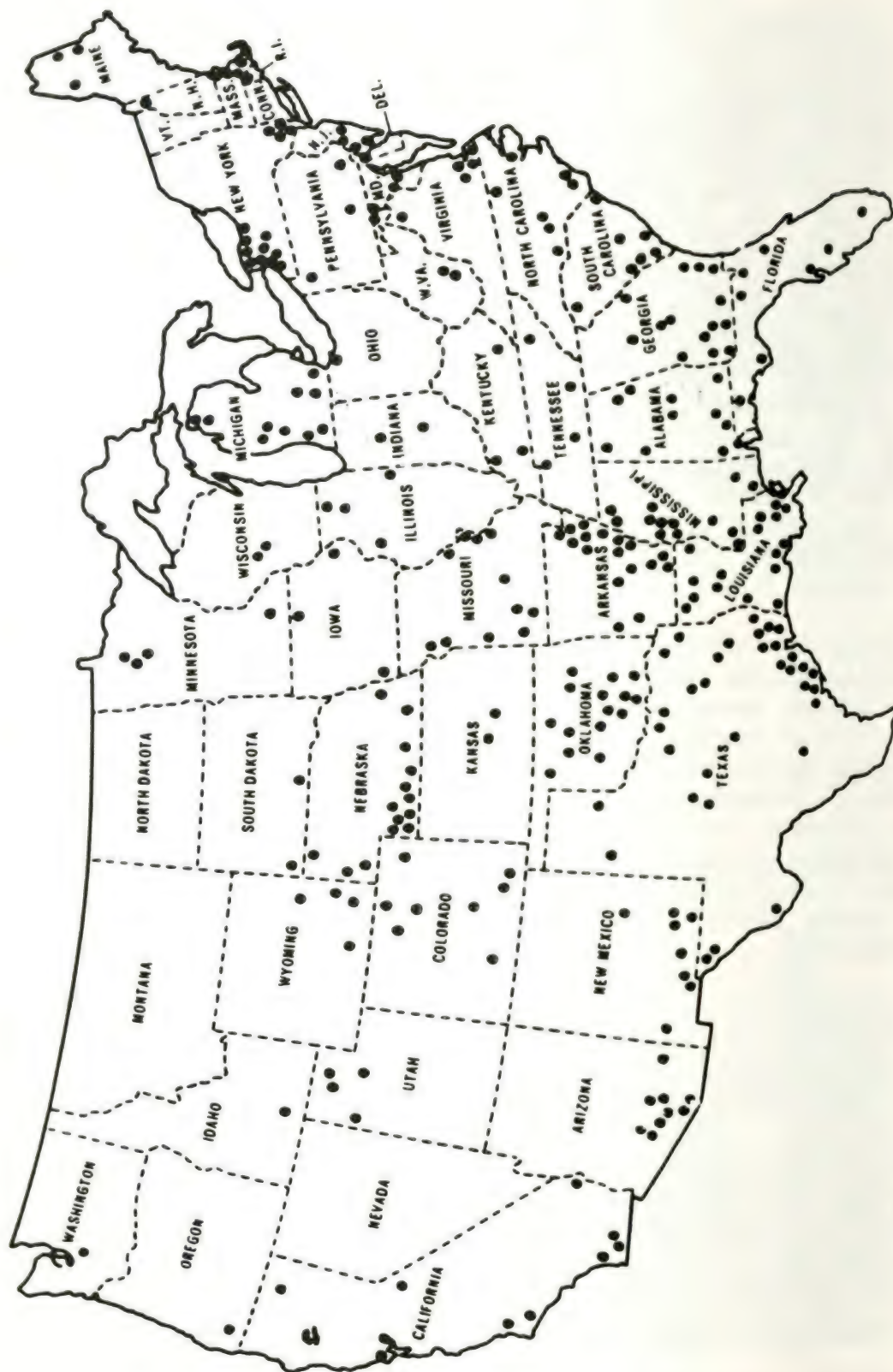


Figure 5-6. Distribution of the major POW camps across the United States as of June, 1944. (U.S. Army Photo)



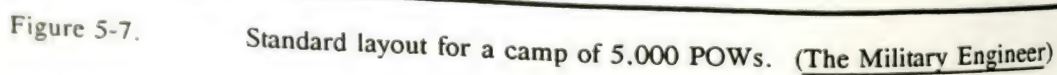
Table 5-1

## Major German Prisoner of War Internment Camps in the United States.

Camp Algoma, Idaho	Camp Douglas, Wyoming
Camp Aliceville, Alabama	Camp Edwards, Massachusetts
Camp Alva, Oklahoma	Camp Ellis, Illinois
Camp Angel Island, California	Camp Evelyn, Michigan
Camp Ashby, Virginia	Camp Fannin, Texas
Camp Ashford, West Virginia	Camp Farragut, Idaho
Camp Atlanta, Nebraska	Camp Florence, Arizona
Camp Atterbury, Indiana	Camp Forrest, Tennessee
Camp Barkeley, Texas	Camp Gordon Johnston, Florida
Camp Beale, California	Camp Grant, Illinois
Camp Blanding, Florida	Camp Gruber, Oklahoma
Camp Bowie, Texas	Camp Hale, Colorado
Camp Brady, Texas	Camp Hearne, Texas
Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky	Camp Hood, Texas
Camp Butner, North Carolina	Camp Houlton, Maine
Camp Campbell, Kentucky	Camp Howze, Texas
Camp Carson, Colorado	Camp Hulén, Texas
Camp Chaffee, Arkansas	Camp Huntsville, Texas
Camp Claiborne, Louisiana	Camp Indianola, Nebraska
Camp Clarinda, Iowa	Camp Jerome, Arkansas
Camp Clark, Missouri	Camp Lee, Virginia
Camp Clinton, Mississippi	Camp Livingston, Louisiana
Camp Como, Mississippi	Camp Lordsburg, New Mexico
Camp Concordia, Kansas	Camp McAlester, Oklahoma
Camp Cooke, California	Camp McCain, Mississippi
Camp Croft, South Carolina	Camp McCoy, Wisconsin
Camp Crossville, Tennessee	Camp McLean, Texas
Camp Crowder, Missouri	Camp Mackall, North Carolina
Camp David, Maryland	Camp Maxey, Texas
Camp Dermott, Arkansas	Camp Mexia, Texas
Camp Monticello, Arkansas	Fort Curtis, Virginia
Camp New Cumberland, Pennsylvania	Fort Custer, Michigan
Camp Ogden, Utah	Fort Devens, Massachusetts
Camp Opelika, Alabama	Fort Dix, New Jersey
Camp Papago Park, Arizona	Fort DuPont, Delaware
Camp Peary, Virginia	Fort Eustis, Virginia
Camp Perry, Ohio	Fort Gordon, Georgia
Camp Phillips, Kansas	Fort Greely, Colorado
Camp Pickett, Virginia	Fort Jackson, South Carolina
Camp Pima, Arizona	Fort Kearny, Rhode Island
Camp Polk, Louisiana	Fort Knox, Kentucky
Camp Popolopen, New York	Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
Camp Pryor, Oklahoma	Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri
Camp Reynolds, Pennsylvania	Fort Lewis, Washington
Camp Jos. T. Robinson, Arkansas	Fort McClellan, Alabama
Camp Roswell, New Mexico	Fort Meade, Maryland
Camp Rucker, Alabama	Fort Niagara, New York
Camp Rupert, Idaho	Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia
Camp Ruston, Louisiana	Fort Ord, California
Camp Scottsbluff, Nebraska	Fort Patrick Henry, Virginia
Camp Shelby, Mississippi	Fort Reno, Oklahoma
Camp Sibert, Alabama	Fort Riley, Kansas
Camp Somerset, Maryland	Fort Robinson, Nebraska
Camp Stewart, Georgia	Fort D. A. Russell, Texas
Camp Stockton, California	Fort Sam Houston, Texas
Camp Sutton, North Carolina	Fort Sheridan, Illinois
Camp Swift, Texas	Fort Sill, Oklahoma
Camp Tonkawa, Oklahoma	Fort F. E. Warren, Wyoming
Camp Trinidad, Colorado	Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland
Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi	Eglin Army Air Field, Florida
Camp Wallace, Texas	Glennan General Hospital, Oklahoma
Camp Wheeler, Georgia	Halloran General Hospital, New York
Camp White, Oregon	Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation, Virginia
Camp Wolters, Texas	Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, Pennsylvania
Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana	Holabird Signal Depot, Maryland
Fort Benning, Georgia	McCloskey General Hospital, Texas
Fort Bliss, Texas	
Fort Bragg, North Carolina	
Fort Crockett, Texas	

(From Stalag U.S.A.)







accomplish this plan by the exposure it gave the prisoners to the American countryside, economy, farmers and local citizens. In small camps American soldiers also got to know the prisoners better, which is not as easily done in a large central camp.

The branch camps for Camp Cooke are listed in Table 5-2. Some of these branch camps were located several hundred miles away. Branch camps were not immediately deactivated at the war's end. It took time to process the large number of prisoners for return to Germany. For this reason the last camp did not close until 1946.

The subject of our story, The Goleta Branch Camp, was located beside Highway 101 on the Edwards Ranch at Gatos Canyon, about nine miles west of Goleta.

Table 5-2

The following is a list of the Branch Camps and the activation and inactivation dates of the camps under Camp Cooke jurisdiction:

<u>Camp</u>	<u>Activated</u>			<u>Inactivated</u>		
Tagus Branch, Tulare County	29	Jul	1944	13	Feb	1946
Chino, San Bernadino County	6	Oct	1944	1	Apr	1945
Goleta, Santa Barbara County	20	Oct	1944	4	Dec	1945
Boswell Ranch, Corcoran, Kings County	1	Dec	1944	5	Oct	1945
Tulare Fairgrounds, Tulare County	11	Dec	1944	24	Jan	1946
Shafter, Kern County	18	Dec	1944	5	Oct	1945
Lamont, Kings County	18	Dec	1944	5	Oct	1945
	7	Jan	1946	23	Mar	1946
Lakelands, Corcoran, Kings County	14	May	1945	5	Oct	1945
	3	Jan	1946	16	Feb	1946
Tipton, Tulare County	24	May	1945	4	Feb	1946
Saticoy, Ventura County	27	May	1945	after		1946
Old River, Kern County	18	Oct	1945	6	Jan	1946
Buttonwillow, Kern County	24	Oct	1945	14	Jan	1946
Delano, Kern County	25	Oct	1945	26	Mar	1946
Tachi Farms, Corcoran, Kings County	21	Nov	1945	2	Jan	1946
Rankin, not known	1	Dec	1945	31	Jan	1946
Lemoore, Fresno County	8	Dec	1945	11	Apr	1946

Nothing has been published to date on the Goleta Branch Camp. Local residents either did not know it existed or paid little attention to it during the war. Research has located several local residents who had the prisoners working for them on their ranches. An aerial photograph taken in 1943 was located in the Photo and Maps Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara. This



shows the Goleta Camp location under construction in 1943. Figure 5-8 is a copy of this rare photograph.

We must thank the International Red Cross for detailed information on this out-of-the-way camp. As a stipulation in the Geneva Convention, each POW camp had to be inspected by a person from the Swiss Government. The result of each inspection was a detailed report on the camp and the conditions found there at the time of the inspection. A copy of these reports for the Camp Cooke branch camps was located in the National Archives (5). No other publications have been located which describe these branch camps.

It should be stated by way of orientation that each branch camp was established as a stand-alone organization with a camp commander who was usually a captain in rank. Each camp had a German spokesman for the prisoners. All services were local but supported by supply trucks from Camp Cooke. Major illnesses were treated at Camp Cooke. The Goleta and Saticoy Branch Camps had small dispensaries, and a Medical Officer from Camp Cooke visited these camps regularly.

The first shipment of 584 prisoners of war arrived in Camp Cooke 16 June 1944. From that time the POW population grew to 8,700 by 15 January 1946. A detailed population table of all camps was obtained from the National Archives (6). From this source we learn that Goleta received its first prisoners in November 1944. There were 250 assigned to the Goleta facilities at the Edwards Ranch. The population there fluctuated from a high of 302 in April 1945 to a low of 212 in June 1945. When the camp was closed in December of 1945, there were 226 prisoners. There were 16 branch camps of which Goleta was one of the earliest established and one of the smallest. The Saticoy Camp in Ventura was one of the largest and, it appears, the last to be closed.

The prisoners at Goleta engaged in contract labor, picking lemons in and around Goleta and packing walnuts at the Goleta Walnut Exchange on Kellogg Avenue.

The first report from the National Archives that describes the Goleta Branch Camp was made by Mr. Verner Tobler of the Swiss Legation on April 19, 1945. In this report he states:

Side Camp No. 3, Goleta--259 prisoners. Opened July 1944. 49 miles Southeast of Camp Cooke. Quonset huts. Prisoners employed at citrus fruits and agriculture.

The second report was made by Mr. Paul Schnyder for the International Red Cross, dated June 9 to 17, 1945. His report on the Goleta Branch Camp states:



9-22-43



Figure 5-8.



### GOLETA SIDE CAMP, CALIFORNIA

CAMP COMMANDER: Captain W. K. Phillips.

CAMP SPOKESMAN: Viktor Thoss.

Goleta Side Camp is located near the Pacific Ocean, 18 miles north of Santa Barbara and about 49 miles south of Camp Cooke. It was visited June 16, 1945. This side camp was opened October 21, 1944.

Prisoners live in Nisson huts in a small enclosure which they have made very attractive.

Capacity of Camp: 250.

Number of Prisoners of War: 212.

U.S. Army Detachment: Two officers and 30 enlisted men.

Forty more prisoners are expected to arrive within the next few days.

Three German army paymaster (civilians) are confined in this camp. All three are more than 50 years old.

Two prisoners escaped about a month previously, but were recaptured. There were three prisoners confined in a small guardhouse 6' x 6', the windows of which had been boarded up. It was stated that the guardhouse windows had been broken out by prisoners confined there some weeks previously. The former camp commander had had the opening boarded up as a result of this outbreak. The hair of some prisoners had been clipped by the orders of the former camp commander for "ease of identification."

Prisoners do agricultural work in the vicinity.

When the Goleta Camp was opened in October 1944 it was commanded by a 1st Lt. Charles W. Small, and a 2nd Lt. Wilford O. Potter. The camp had 30 guards and six guard towers. Most of the prisoners were doctors, dentists, teachers and paymasters. Three were noted as being civilians over 50 years old.

A serious problem with the early prisoners resulted from the extent to which most had been indoctrinated with Nazism. Many of the early camps had strong Nazi organizations within them that terrorized the prisoners and brought pressure on them not to work too willingly for their captors. A task system was set up by the camp commanders and attempts made to enforce it, but it was resisted by the Nazi organizations in the camps. The Goleta Camp had work strikes for this reason.

As can be surmised from the report, an escape occurred and prisoners were confined to a 6' x 6' guardhouse without windows and some prisoners' hair was clipped. To counteract the terror tactics of the Nazis in some prisons, the POWSPD, mentioned earlier, was established to denazify the prisoners as fast as possible.

At the same time that these events were noted by Mr. Paul Schnyder of the International Red Cross, the Army had changed the command of the Goleta Camp to a



Captain W. H. Phillips, while Wilford O. Potter became a 1st Lieutenant. (Apparently the conditions at the Goleta Camp precipitated the change in command.) Capt. Phillips stated to the Swiss that he would investigate these conditions. It is interesting to note that a Captain M. H. Phillips was Commander of the Saticoy Camp at the same time.

Mr. Tobler from the Swiss Legation and Mr. Schnyder were accompanied on their visits to the Goleta Branch Camp by representatives from the U.S. State Department Special War Problems Division. The sequence of events in this story and dates of camp inspections are summarized in Table 3 to provide the reader with a clear perspective of events. One interesting observation from this Table is the relatively short time that the prisoner camps were in operation. Another is the number of foreign nationals that were able to come to the U.S. during wartime to inspect them.

Table 5-3

Summary of Events and Inspections Received  
(source: The National Archives)

September 23, 1944	Mr. M. E. Perret	Swiss Legation
October 20, 1944	Goleta Camp opened	
April 11, 1945	Lt. Small Camp Commander	
April 19-20, 1945	Mr. Tobler	Swiss Legation
May 1, 1945	Luis Hortal	Intern, YMCA
June 9-17, 1945	Mr. P. Schnyder	International Red Cross
July 20, 1945	Capt. Phillips	New Goleta Camp Commander
July 25, 1945	Earl Gustof Almquist	International YMCA

As mentioned earlier, the prisoners were used in Goleta to pick lemons and walnuts. They were paid by the growers less than going market wages but more than it cost to maintain them, so the Army actually made money on the prisoner camp program.

In the Goleta area, the needs of the farmers were coordinated by the Coast Farm Labor Association. This organization was headed by Mr. D. Barnes who was appointed by Senator William Hollister.

Mr. Norman Rowe managed the Walnut House on Kellogg in Goleta. He stated that 50-60 prisoners were used to pick, process and store walnuts.

The author was not able to locate any photos of the prisoners' camp in the Army or National Archives. However, from local inquiries, a set of 8 mm films of the



Goleta camp taken by Mr. D. Barnes was provided by his widow, Mrs. E. C. Barnes. The following group of photographs, Figures 5-9 to 5-14 which show what this camp looked like, are made from these films. First is a photograph of American guards in a WW II jeep. Next is a view of the POWs entering the camp, an overview of the camp showing the Quonset huts mentioned by Mr. Gates, a view of one of the six guard towers and the water tower, and a picture of the camp headquarters is shown in Figure 5-14.

The German prisoners could not have had a better location for a vacation during those war years than where they were in Goleta, even though they did have to pick our lemons. At the end of WW II the camps were closed and abandoned by the Army. The camp huts were used by laborers and then by the nomadic Hippies in the late 1960s. In 1970 the few remnants of the Goleta Branch Camp were finally eradicated. As this was being done, Mrs. Elizabeth Hvolboll was there to photograph them. The final set of photos, Figures 5-15 to 5-17 in this story, show a fallen guard tower, the ocean views through the barbed wire fence, and the water tower enshrouded in smoke from the burning huts. Today as you pass this site, only the platform on which the water tower stood remains to mark the camp's location. The present Highway 101 was built to the south of the old road so that this tank platform is more visible than it was during the war.

A logical question to ask is did any prisoners return to this area? The answer is yes, but how many is not known. Through Harvey Green one was located. He is Mr. Ortwin Holdt, now a resident of Carpinteria. A phone call interview revealed that Mr. Holdt had been at Camp Cooke and then sent to the Saticoy Branch Camps via a number of other camps, where he worked in the orchards. Mr. Holdt stated that he was transferred in 1946 from the Saticoy Camp and then sent by ship to Belgium where he was turned over to the British army. He was then sent to work on farms in England as a prisoner until 1948 when he was finally repatriated. He returned to this country in the 1960s where he raised his family on the South Coast. He's now in business in Carpinteria.

It is of interest to learn that after the war ended, many German prisoners were sent to England and France, where they were kept until those countries' soldiers could be returned from Europe, where they had remained to occupy Germany and Italy.

This step back into history again brings to light the dramatic upheaval caused by the events of WW II and how close to Goleta these events have come. Those Germans that were taken prisoner and sent to Goleta to wait out the war's end were lucky that lemons were all that had to be picked. The soldiers of the Wehrmacht were not as well treated by the other Allies.

With the end of the war the American farmers returned to their fields and orchards and the German prisoners were shipped back to their homeland. But for this brief history, our awareness of these historic events would be completely obscured by the passage of time and eyewitnesses.



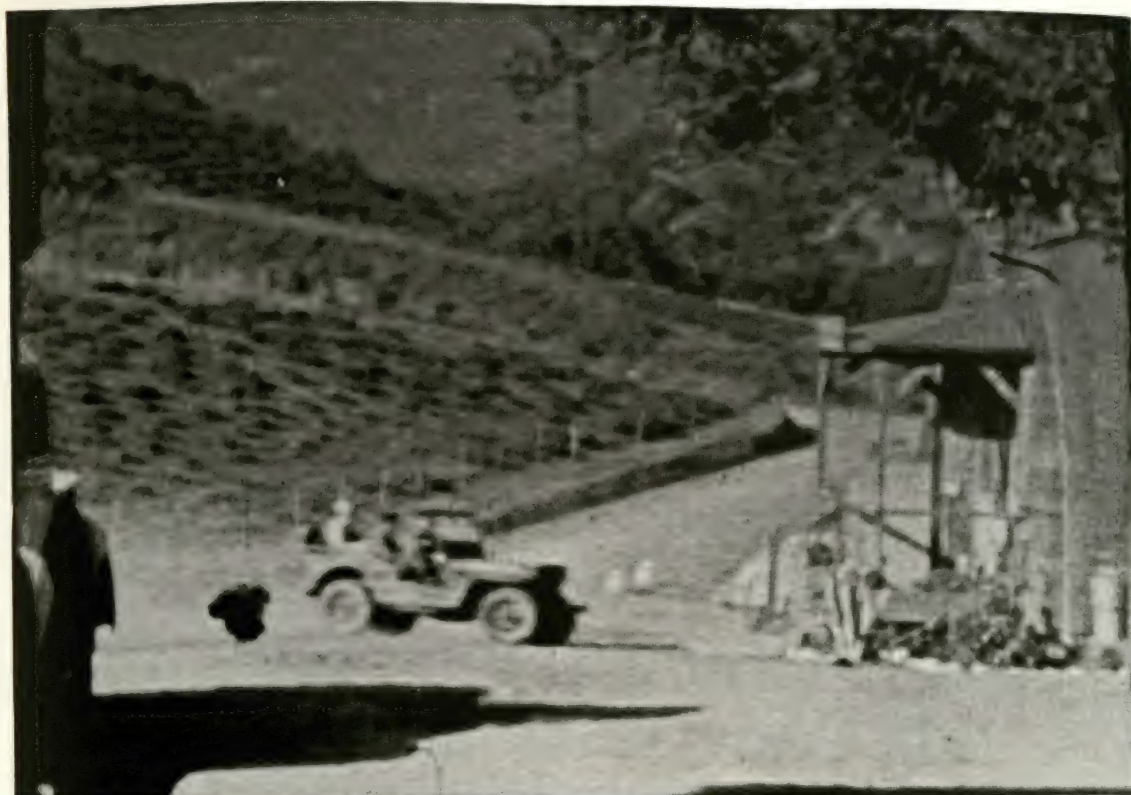


Figure 5-9.



Figure 5-10.





Figure 5-11.



Figure 5-12.





Figure 5-13.



Figure 5-14.

5-17





Figure 5-15.





Figure 5-16.





Figure 5-17.



## Chapter 6

### INTERVIEW WITH ORTWIN HOLDT IN 1986

Ortwin Holdt was a German prisoner who was drawn back to the Central Coast of California after his exposure to it during his stint here from 1944 to 1946. His experience as a prisoner is a rare living history recorded here for the first time. The experience of meeting your enemy against overwhelming odds, surrendering and then being whisked away around the world is told in the following interview conducted at his home in Carpinteria in 1986. Figure 6-1A is an early photograph of Mr. Holdt. Figure 6-1B is a photograph of Mr. Holdt at 20 years, in the back of a group of comrades, dressed in American khaki marked with "PW."

"My name is Ortwin Hildebrand Holdt. I was a prisoner of war of the American Armed Forces during the Second World War. My serial number was 81G ("G" for "German") 309484.

"I was captured in 1944 in the invasion of the French Riviera in the south of France by American forces coming from North Africa, Sicily, Corsica and Sardinia invading near Marseille. I was stationed at the time with a German radar unit as a member of the Luftwaffe. One early morning we saw a huge fleet appearing on the horizon, guns blazing, and we knew the invasion was on because earlier in that week we had been sprayed by American-marked Lightning planes. After about a two-hour bombardment of the ships' guns as well as aircraft, our commanding officer hoisted a white flag. At the time I was about 20 years of age and we were in an outpost. We saw that white flag flying but we did not realize that it was a sign of surrender. Well, anyways, we followed the order that came through over our intercom and we blew up our equipment (we had some light machine guns) and were summoned to a certain spot. There the different groups came together and we saw our first American soldiers coming in through the mine fields.

"We were taken to the beach (we were practically on the beach anyway because the villas had been at our disposal). We were stationed in the villas between our radar units. There were pine trees and vegetation very similar to what we have here in California. On the beach we were quite surprised that many of the American GI's addressed us in German and we learned later that they were descendants of German immigrants who had migrated to America 20 or 30 years earlier! It was a rather friendly affair. Of course, we lost our watches and any valuables we had but that was part of the game, I suppose.

"We were put aboard the transport ships (LST's) somewhere between Frejus and Monte Carlo. At night I was told that the German two-engine bombers sunk one ship next to us. I slept right through it, I didn't even hear it. The anti-aircraft guns on board were probably firing but I don't recollect any of it.



"From there we were taken to Ajaccio on Corsica. After a few days there, we boarded another boat and were taken to Oran and then by trucks to an abandoned Army camp which had the American Army force from Ramea. After two weeks, we were again taken to a Liberty ship and went through the Straits of Gibraltar in an American convoy to Norfolk, Virginia. That was in October of 1944. There we embarked after a beautiful voyage--nobody got seasick, we lived on C rations and could walk around the ship and there were no submarine attacks.

"From Virginia, after delousing and losing all our hair (which seems to be a standard practice in American forces), we were put on board a train and arrived in Florence, Arizona, which nowadays houses a State prison. We were put to work there keeping up the camp and certain groups worked in the field picking cotton.

"After about six to eight weeks there, I was picked out with about 120 other prisoners of war and we were formed into a company and were transported by truck to Camp Irwin in California, which is still in existence today. I spent the winter of 1944-45 there. We took care of the camp and such, we worked in the mess hall, cleaned up the streets and so on.

"In the spring of 1945, the news reached us that the Germans had lost a great offensive against the British and American forces, which turned out to be the Battle of the Bulge. The spirits among the German prisoners were the lowest at that time. Our captain there was a stuntman in Hollywood and he liked being closer to Hollywood, so he had himself and our company transferred to March Air Force Base near Riverside. There again we did the same kind of work, cleaning up the campsite and working in the mess halls. Also at that time I had picked up a little English and was made an interpreter.

"In the summer or fall of 1945 I was again transferred into Santa Barbara County to a camp in Saticoy near Ventura. We were employed there as lemon and orange pickers. I remember one afternoon after having done our work, we watched an American high school team play football--a game unknown to us. It was American football, not soccer which we were familiar with. So we stood on our stools and looked over the fence and watched the boys--whatever they were doing!

"When we picked we used the trucks that were in use prior to our coming by the Mexican braceros or laborers which had both English and Spanish markings on them, "Exit Salida, 20 Hombres." We spent a few months picking lemons around Fillmore, Santa Paula, Ventura and Oxnard. When they needed cotton pickers in the San Joaquin Valley, I was transferred to Lemoore Air Force Base and there we did pick cotton. We were given instructions on how to pick cotton together with a book which we were allowed to purchase at the commissary on how to pick cotton. We did have one guard when we went out and he had a rifle but he was mostly shooting at the birds. None of us ever tried to escape even though by that time the war had finished.



"We spent four to six weeks in Lemoore Air Force Base where the pictures that American newscasters had taken of the concentration camps were shown to us, which I had heard of but had no idea what went on there and it was a shock to us as well. After that we were returned to Saticoy and a short time later I was transferred to the main camp, Camp Cooke, which is now Vandenberg Air Force Base.

"I don't know if anything remains of the camp there; it was fenced in as usual with a tower on each corner and a searchlight, but no one tried to escape. We spent our time at Camp Cooke again looking after the camp facilities. I was put in charge of a small group that had to clean up the movie house. We cleaned that up in the mornings and we made popcorn. We were also shown movies during our stay in this country, whatever was current at the time.

"I was with the second wave of German prisoners that came to this country. The first were the prisoners of war of Rommel's Afrika Corps who came in about 1943 and I understand they were located in a camp near Goleta. We were never brought into contact with those people because these prisoners were taken when the power of Germany was at its zenith in Europe. Hitler's armies had captured from the Pyrenees to the doors of Moscow and into northern Africa. You could not tell those people that Germany was going to lose the war. If you did express that belief, you probably would not be alive the next morning. For that reason we were kept apart from these people.

"In January of 1946 I was hoping to be repatriated. We were divided into four groups according to our hometowns in Germany--Russian, American, British and French. My hometown is in the eastern part of Germany which would have been the Russian zone. I chose not to return there so I gave my address as Cologne, where I had an uncle at the time. This was in the British sector. We were put aboard a train and then a Victory ship in New York and after a rather rough two weeks, landed in Antwerp, Belgium. After a week in Belgium, getting used to the rain, we were then shipped to Great Britain. Till the very last minute we were hoping we were heading for Hamburg, but when the boat turned west instead of east in the channel, we knew our dream of home was out. So we landed in London on the docks.

"I ended up in a labor camp in Wales. We were billeted on the farms and I worked on a dairy farm, milking cows and what have you. We were rather free there. There's one incident I remember--most of us after a while acquired civilian clothing so we blended in with the local population, and one interpreter of the British Army came out and he recognized me and he asked me what I was doing in civilian. Well, one word led to another and I ended up with six days of bread and water because that was not allowed.

"In 1948 I was discharged but decided to stay in Great Britain for a little while longer. I was given a leave of four weeks and returned as a civilian laborer. In 1951 I returned for good to my uncle in Cologne but I couldn't get used to life in Europe anymore. The cities were all destroyed. My uncle had had a jewelry business, specializing in wristwatches, and he was rebuilding that.



"But I personally was afraid that as the tension between the East and West had already gone through the Berlin crisis, it would end up in a shooting war and I had no intention of going through that again. I wasn't able to emigrate as a refugee to the United States so I chose Canada. I spent nine years in Canada and met my Austrian wife there. We had a son there and in 1961 I was able to come back to California, which had been my dream all along. I have been living in the Tri-Countries area ever since.

"My memory of Camp Cooke, which is now Vandenberg Air Force Base, was brought to a highlight when I had to take my son, then 19 or 20, to his training for ROTC there, exactly 30 years later from the time I was stationed there.

"We were able to purchase books through our commissary. We had our choice of I don't remember how many books but they were provided by the Swiss Red Cross. Inside here (holding up the book) is the notice that this book is personal property of Ortwin H. Holdt with my serial number 81G 309484 signed by a captain. It is an encyclopedia and this, together with the instructions on how to pick cotton, are the two memorabilia I have from this time and this country. The book was provided from the Swiss YMCA, the World Federation based in Geneva, Switzerland."





Figure 6-1a. Photograph of Ortwin Holdt.



Figure 6-1b. Ortwin Holdt, back left, with German comrades.



## Chapter 7

### INTERVIEW WITH MRS. RUTH GAULT PRATT NOVEMBER 1986

Mrs. Ruth Gault Pratt was interviewed by the author to obtain her recollections of Goleta in the 1930s and, in particular, her experiences during the shelling by the Japanese submarine in 1942.

"I came to the Canyon (Tecolote) on December 7, 1935.

"The road splits to the right, like you are going to the big house, the Hacienda, we used to call it. There were a lot of orchards there because we were a good mile or more past where the Hacienda was. There wasn't much up there in the way of buildings, just orchards and our house there all by itself. Spauldings gave us a beautiful new wood cook range for a wedding present.

"The citrus orchards are all gone and it's all avocados [now]. The frost alarms for the citrus orchards were in our bedroom. We spent the first three weeks of our honeymoon with my husband being up all night. We had the damndest freeze Goleta had had in years. In those days it was all the smudge pots and when the alarm went off, he'd start checking thermometers and then when it would get to a certain temperature, he'd have to start waking guys up to come and light the smudge pots. Everything would get so black from the smudge pots. Goleta was all citrus and walnuts in those days.

"When we were kids, we used to go up the first canyon going into the Santa Ynez Mountains. There were two Doty families and the Rutherford family lived in the big rock house. And old Sam lived up at the head of the canyon and the Rennies, they were the Scotch people that we went to. There was a Naples Station in those days and a grocery store was there and we used to go there to pick up little things at the Naples train station. They used to go to town every second Saturday to do their main shopping. The town of Naples just had the railroad station and a store. Seemed to me the whole thing was under one roof.

"There was an old Scotchman by the name of Jim Troop who whittled canes out of bird's-eye maple sitting in front of the train station. That was my uncle G. G., George Gault, sitting there. Think he made about 13 of them. They have a thistle on them. That was there to keep the people out of the railroad track.

"There were solid eucalyptus groves near Ellwood School when I lived there. In 1932 during the Depression, what is now Isla Vista was alive with the Okies coming from the Dust Bowl. The groves were alive with people in tents, the migrant workers.



"There were all kinds of oil derricks in front of Tecolote Ranch. All kinds of things galore when I went there in 1935. Barnsdall was farther down behind the Richfield oil station. There was a little gatehouse there. The Lutons were active in the oil business.

[With regards to the Japanese attack] "In 1942 we were on 2-hour daylight savings time. It was 8 o'clock in the morning before it would get light but it was light until 7:00 at night. I heard some explosions and I thought something had gone wrong at the refinery. At that time, 1942, the oil fields and platforms were very busy.

"Four shells came into the Tecolote Canyon and over the bunkhouse that evening. The only one retrieved was found the next morning lodged in the fork of the main canyon road and the drive to our house, approximately 300 feet away. Mrs. G. (Debroah Spaulding) Pelissero, to the best of my knowledge, has that shell, as the Army eventually gave it back to the ranch owners (her parents). A second shell passed over our house into the canyon. The Army spent several weeks trying to locate the shell but never found it as the orange and avocado groves and the brush were so dense that far up the canyon. The shells were apparently all duds, as the one located had been.

"Clete Roberts, then a young reporter in Los Angeles, was the first reporter to get through to the area of the shelling. He was guest speaker at the 25th anniversary dinner that was held at the Timbers Restaurant, Ellwood.

"Many of the people that inhabited the area shelled have now passed on, but there must be others who could still say 'I WAS THERE.'

"I have been here in Santa Ynez 43 years. I was the postmaster here for 15 years. I knew most of the people then. There were 3,000 or 4,000 people in the whole valley."



## Chapter 8

### EYEWITNESS TO HISTORY

Like lightning, seldom do historic events strike in the same place more than once. In the case of the Dos Pueblos Ranch area eight miles west of Goleta, history has not lived up to this axiom. What is even rarer is that someone has been present to witness the number of historic events that have occurred in this area. The eyewitness to history in this case was Benjamin F. "Shorty" Gates.

Mr. Gates' personal experiences with historical events were recorded on the Dos Pueblos Ranch in 1985. Shorty retired in 1971 as superintendent of the ranch. He started working at the ranch in 1928. Figure 8-1 records this late interview as Mr. Gates and the author discuss the location of these events using aerial photos at the Naples Railroad Depot site. Over the 43 years in which he was a resident of Dos Pueblos, history came to Shorty and happened around him. His comments in the following pages describe them and bear directly on the events reported in earlier chapters.

#### Den Adobe

Dos Pueblos is the site of historic Chumash Indian villages first discovered by Cabrillo in 1542. It was also the center of the Dos Pueblos Rancho Land Grant awarded to Nicolas Den in 1861. The Den Adobe, located on the western edge of Dos Pueblos Canyon, was the center of social life for many years during Den's heyday (15).

This pioneer property was acquired by H. G. Wylie and then torn down in 1931. The adobe was constructed in 1843.

"People didn't take a lot of pictures in the thirties. I helped tear down the adobe. There were hundreds of letters from all over the world lying on the floor. The stamps alone were valuable. I was pounding on the walls one day and hit a hollow space. A silver butter dish, herbal jar, crystal wine goblets marked with 'W' and a bottle of cognac liquor were found in the walls. These were placed there by Mrs. Williams. My daughter has the crystal. I drank the liquor--was good. Most of the adobe was pushed into the canyon, but a lot was taken to the Spaulding Ranch in Tecolote Canyon and used to build the stables."

#### Naples Station

Figure 8-2 shows the Naples Town Railroad Depot as it appeared in 1912. The Naples depot was some distance away from the town of Naples, which was located on the floor of the canyon.





Figure 8-1.

Interview with Fred Gates, left, and the author at the Naples Railroad Depot site in 1985.





Figure 8-2. Naples Railroad Depot about 1912.





"They all looked alike, just like the one in Goleta. When I was a kid in Colorado, they all looked alike. There was a siding here--trains would meet and pull over. During the war, troops would get off to stretch. During the war there were guards up and down the tracks, and on all the bridges. There was a water tower over in front of those sycamores for the steam trains. Water was pumped up to it from Dos Pueblos Canyon. The tank was about the last thing to go. Cattle and hay were loaded on cars at the siding. We took off a lot of gravel for road repair at Dos Pueblos."

Figure 2-2 shows the location today. Only the sycamore trees remain to mark the site.

#### 14-Inch Railroad Guns

In the summer of 1937 two railroad guns described in Chapter 2 were moved into position on the Dos Pueblos Ranch almost in front of the Naples railroad station. Since the testing of these two guns took place on the Dos Pueblos Ranch, Mr. Gates was there and took an active part. In fact, the author learned of these tests through comments made by Shorty in an earlier conversation.

"They had ten heavy army tents set up out in the fields with one being a cook tent. About 60 people were there for about a month. I ate their food now and then. They took off from the siding toward where that group of cows are with a railroad spur and set up the two guns. The thing that amazed us was those big 16x16s or 12x12s [wood shoring] they put up there for angle braces. When they fired the guns they would make kindling wood of them from the recoil. Sure made splinters."

These guns were returned to Fort McArthur where they remained, fortunately without needing to be used to repel an attack from the sea.

#### Coast Defense Guns

A 6-inch sea coast battery was set up in 1942, about a quarter mile east of the test position of the 14-inch guns, according to Mr. Gates.

"The commander got after the men for driving through the grass and parking their trucks near the camouflaged gun. From the trail through the grass anyone could see the guns' location."

#### The Japanese Submarine Attack

In February of 1942 a Japanese submarine appeared off the Ellwood oil fields and began shelling the oil tanks near the Barnsdall tract. The location and route of the vessel is shown in Figure 3-1. Shorty Gates was an eyewitness to this first attack by a foreign power on American soil since the War of 1812. Mr. Gates' comments are as follows:



"Someone yelled that something was going on down the coast at the oil fields. We grabbed a rifle and jumped in the truck and headed to the Naples Depot. There was a siding there where boxcars were standing. We climbed up on the cars and looked down the coast. A submarine was moving along the coast toward us, firing. We could see the puffs of smoke and see the men on deck. The submarine passed our location and submerged out of sight to the west. After it was all over an Air Force guy came out here--a Colonel officer--he asked if anyone was scared. I don't remember anyone being scared. After it was all over someone made a remark--good thing they didn't shoot at these boxcars. It could have been an invasion, we didn't think anything about it. I think it was a political thing like anything else, it was a slap at Roosevelt while he was making his speech." (President Roosevelt was giving one of his fireside speeches to the nation as the attack was underway.)

### The Prisoner of War Camp

In Goleta a camp, which was a branch camp of the main camp at Camp Cooke in Lompoc, was located in Gatos Canyon along Highway 101 on the Edwards Ranch. Prisoners were sent out to Goleta to pick the crops in place of the Americans who were being used in the war effort. Prisoners from this camp were used to pick lemons on the Dos Pueblos Ranch. Mr. Gates has the following comments on the prisoner of war camp in Goleta:

"They had towers, I think six towers [at the prison camp]. Then quonset huts--Army quonset huts. They worked for us over here, we employed all of them at one time, they picked lemons. They were a great savings to us. They were the type that were doctors, dentists, educated people--Germans. They were interested in everything. They [U.S. Army] delivered them over here in the morning and they didn't even have a guard with them, turned them loose in the lemon orchard, let them pick lemons, then picked them up at night. Oh, sometimes they had a guard with them but not too often. Funny part was that, one of them was a doctor. He just walked off one day and he went down to Goleta. He caught a ride on the highway and went down to Goleta, walking all around town there; finally someone recognized him--uniform and all. He said he wasn't trying to get away, 'I just wanted to see what the town was like.' He didn't speak English. Most were like him, he could have hooked a train and gone anywhere. They were on their honor."

Mr. Gates' comments were given spontaneously at the site where the events occurred. Figure 8-3 shows the closeness of the above events along the coast of California. Mr. Gates has left a rich legacy for all of us. Those who find value and interest in historical research will testify that there is no substitute for an eyewitness to history.



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Figure 8-3.



## Chapter 9

### HANCOCK COLLEGE OF AERONAUTICS TRAINS 10,000 AIRMEN FOR THE ARMY AIR CORPS

Chapter 2 described the development of Camp Cooke before the beginning of the Second World War. In anticipation of an outbreak of war, a neighboring institution was also involved in preparations for war, the air war, not the ground war.

In southeastern Santa Maria just off Main Street, at the present location of Hancock College, the Hancock College of Aeronautics started to train pilots for the Army Air Force in 1939. Hancock College of Aeronautics was originally formed in 1928 by the Los Angeles businessman Captain G. Allan Hancock to offer a formal training to pilots and mechanics in order to support the developing air transport business in the United States and to help bring some order to the then reckless barnstorming image of the aviation profession.

A little background on Captain Hancock is appropriate. Captain Hancock was born in 1875 to Major Henry Hancock and Ida Haraszthy (4A). From the beginning, Captain Hancock's potential was formidable. In 1860, his father had acquired a large parcel of land in Los Angeles in what was to become the La Brea oil fields. On his mother's side, Captain Hancock was the grandson of Count Agoston Haraszthy of Hungary, the founder of the California wine industry and one of early California's most mysterious and industrious pioneers.

Captain Hancock was an avid seaman and commercial shipping businessman. In this field he became licensed as a ship's master to captain any seagoing vessel. In this way he acquired the title "Captain," not from his association with the Army Air Corps.

In 1909 Captain Hancock formed the Hiberian Bank and in 1910 the Rancho La Brea Oil Company. He was instrumental in the development of the exclusive residential area in Los Angeles known as Hancock Park and for providing the funding for the housing development of Sherman Oaks in the San Fernando Valley.

In the 1920s Captain Hancock turned his interest to the Santa Maria Valley, where he developed the local Santa Maria railroad, ranching and food processing industries and the College of Aeronautics.

The College of Aeronautics consisted of administration buildings, hangars, classrooms and barracks clustered along the edge of a paved taxi strip. There were no paved runways. About 400 acres of flat, grassy fields next to the taxi strip provided ample room for training and practicing takeoffs and landings by the rookie pilots. All trainees wore uniforms and learned to march and drill.



In May 1939, with war on the horizon, General Henry ("Hap") H. Arnold, Chief of Army Air Forces, gathered together eight operators of training schools like Hancock College and requested that they begin to train pilots for the Air Force. This was the first time such a scheme had been conceived by the Army. The schools were asked to proceed without funding until an appropriation bill could be passed by Congress. All schools agreed to proceed. Eventually 63 such schools became involved in the program, training 200,000 pilots. On July 1, 40 cadets arrived at Hancock College. In the ensuing five years over 8,500 pilots and 1,500 mechanics were trained by Hancock College. A number of the pilots flew B25s on the Colonel Doolittle raid against Japan. During the Korean conflict, 1,000 mechanics were trained for the Air Force at the College.

In 1945 operation of Hancock College of Aeronautics was turned over to the University of Southern California (USC). In 1954 the College was closed and training moved to the Los Angeles Campus of USC.

In 1954 the G. Allan Hancock Community College District was formed. This body first leased the land for \$1.00 and then purchased the property from Captain Hancock. Today the original facilities are lost in the development of college buildings, parking lots, shops and the surrounding City of Santa Maria. Captain Hancock died in 1965.

While thousands of pilots were trained at Hancock and went on to fly the latest fighters and bombers, they were trained by dozens of the old cloth-wing barnstorming pilots called out of business or retirement by Hancock. Ernie Johnson, who lives in Santa Maria today, was an instructor from 1941 to 1943. He remembers that most basic training was conducted using Stearman PT-13s. He was inducted into the Army Air Corps in 1943 and spent the rest of the war flying transports.

Leon Durdin was an instructor from 1940 to 1945 and spent almost every day flying until his recent retirement. He presently resides in Orcutt, California. He remembers flying down to Goleta to buzz the Marine Base.

Art Snyder spent many years flying at the Goleta Airport. He moved to Hancock in January 1942 where he instructed recruits until May 1943 when he was inducted into the Army Air Corps. He flew transports for the duration. One of his cargo flights to the Pacific carried components for the first atomic bomb dropped on Japan. On release from the Air Corps, Art went back to flying in Goleta and also started the Flight Line Restaurant in one of the ex-Marine Camp's machine gun repair sheds. Art now resides in Goleta, California.

These are but three of the many instructors who taught at Hancock during World War II located by the author. It is hoped that these and others who read this short account of preparations for war on the Western Front will enjoy recalling events at a training facility now lost in the surroundings to the modern world.





Figure 9-1. 1942 photograph of taxi strip in front of Hancock College of Aeronautics. Aircraft are Stearman PT-13s. Field in the background is location of G. Allan Hancock Community College in 1988.



Figure 9-2. 1945 photograph of hangars and administration buildings. Aircraft in the foreground are Ryan PT-22s. Background are Stearman PT-13s. Arrows indicate buildings remaining in 1988.





Figure 9-3. 1988 photograph of College of Aeronautics Administration Building on G. Allan Hancock Campus.



Figure 9-4. 1988 photograph of hangars used as warehouses in a commercial area west of G. Allan Hancock College.



## Chapter 10

### THE SANTA MARIA AIR FORCE TRAINING BASE FOR P-38 PILOTS

North of Camp Cooke was located one of the largest World War II bases on the West Coast. The Santa Maria Army Air Base covered approximately 3,600 acres of land located about four miles south of the City of Santa Maria. The main gate was located about one mile west of Highway 101. Land for the field was acquired sometime before 1942.

The air field was officially accepted by the Fourth Air Force for a bomber base on May 1, 1942. Colonel Robin A. Day was placed in command. As was the case with most U.S. bases during World War II, a historian was assigned to prepare a history of the facility. In this case Edward E. Roed, First Lieutenant, was the historian. The original record of the base is at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. Due to its strategic coastal location, the Santa Maria Air Base was considered ideal for training of bombardment groups prior to overseas duty. However, the base was transferred to the Fourth Air Service Command in December 1942. The field was used for service and support training with little emphasis on flying. The field grew monthly with the assignment of more recruit personnel, extension of roads, and construction of more red tar-paper-and-batten villages. New groups of trainees were rotated every month. As at Goleta, many living amenities were provided, such as theater, bowling, laundry, restaurant, church, etc. Base activities were publicized in the Field newspaper, The Bombsighter, which was first published on April 7, 1944.

It became apparent that the Field was being wasted as an air service command, as there were only eight aircraft assigned, and aircraft maintenance instruction was the only aircraft-specific program underway. The Field possessed three runways originally constructed for bomber use. Therefore, the Field was transferred to the Fourth Air Force on September 15, 1943, and most service groups were transferred to other organizations.

As the Fourth Air Force prepared to turn the Field over to the Fourth Bomber Command, a dispute developed as to whether or not the Field could be used as a bomber base. Earlier experience indicated that the runways would not stand up under constant use by heavy bombers because they were constructed on loamy, sandy ground with only a thin layer of hard pan on top. This proved to be the case, so again command was transferred, this time to the Fourth Fighter Command on September 16, 1943, for final training of fighter groups. So arrived the P-38 Lightnings.

This move again changed the complexion of the Field. Seasoned pilots were being given final tactical training and moving on. The standing service army was not needed. Air-to-ground ranges and small-arms training ranges were installed for the pilots. These pilots were putting the final touches on combat maneuvers prior to shipment overseas.



Early in October 1943, the anti-aircraft artillery units appeared on the Field. In December 1943 Oxnard Flight Strip, Oxnard, and Estrella Army Air Field, Paso Robles, California, were assigned to the Santa Maria Field. This was the organization of the Field until the close of hostilities in 1945.

The Santa Maria Army Air Base would probably have had a lackluster history if it had not been for the arrival of the P-38 Lightnings. Designed by Kelley Johnson at Lockheed, Burbank, California, the P-38 fighter was one of the premier aircraft of World War II. Used in both theaters of the War, the P-38 was referred to by the Germans as "the fork-tailed devil" and by the Japanese as "two planes with one pilot." Many a bomber pilot on his way to Frankfurt or Berlin saw his chances of returning increase to nearly 100% with an escort of these powerful aircraft, which were designed to fly as high as the bombers and with the same range. Many a Zero or Messerschmitt pilot saw his luck run out after an encounter with a P-38. Thousands of kills were scored by the P-38, which had greater firepower and accuracy with its four 50-caliber machine guns and one 20 mm cannon clustered at the center of the aircraft fuselage. Over the war years some 5,000 P-38s were built, primarily by Lockheed but some 200 by Consolidated-Vultee. Today very few of these "wild ones" are in existence.

On January 28, 1989, a 50th anniversary celebration marking the first flight of the Lockheed P-38 was held at the "Field" in Santa Maria. At this event Lefty Garner demonstrated for veteran and novices alike his "No. 13" White Lightning P-38 which he has completely restored. Colonel Ralph Garman, one of the first pilots to fly the P-38, presented a history of the P-38 and commented on his experiences with it in combat. This anniversary celebration was also the occasion for a reunion of the World War II pilots who received their wings at Hancock Field.

As with most other bases on the Central Coast, when World War II came to an end, a slow phaseout of the Field began. It was placed on the surplus property list in 1946. In 1948 the City of Santa Maria and the County of Santa Barbara formed a district for joint management of the Field and its red tar-paper-and-batten buildings. In 1964 a special district was formed and the Field became the Santa Maria Municipal Airport. Today most evidences of the World War II look have been removed. The primary structures left are one of the original hangars and the P-38 bore sight and test stand at one corner of the airport. Many pilots learned to "fly" the P-38 in an aircraft securely tethered to this concrete stand.

Today the Santa Maria Airport is a modern municipal facility and growing commercial area. But in one corner of the terminal is located the Santa Maria Museum of Flight, which is dedicated to recalling and presenting the past history of the Field and aviation in general. This organization is staffed by volunteer "oldtimers" like Chuck Alm, who flew P-38s in Africa, and Roy Marsh, who received his primary training at Hancock and final training in P-38s at the Field with Charlie Morehouse. Both flew for the First Fighter Group in Italy.

Many who live in the Santa Maria area today represent a rich heritage of those pilots who trained for war on the Western Front.



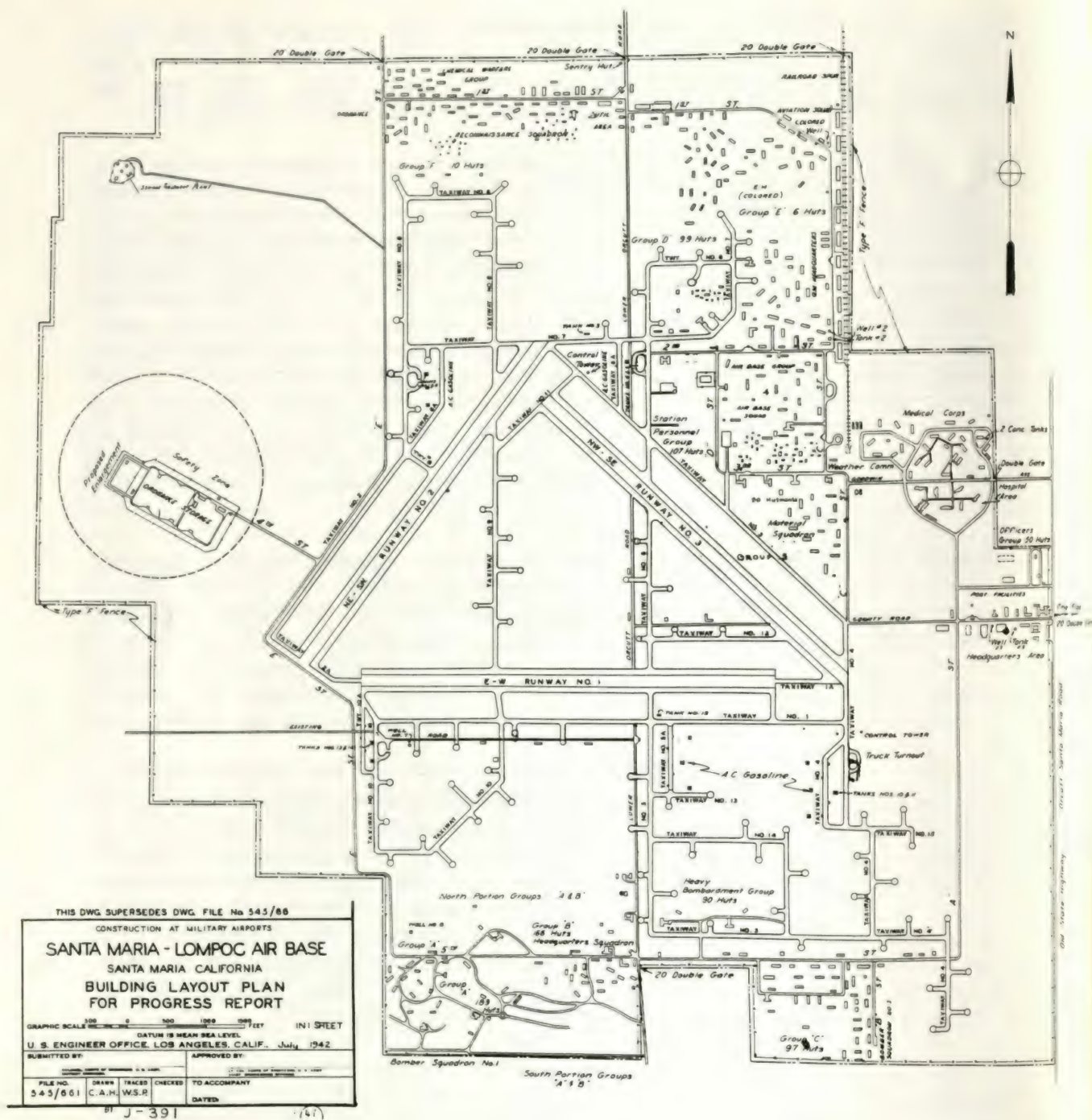


Figure 10-1.

1942 Army Engineers drawing of the Santa Maria Army Air Base. Machine gun and pistol target ranges were added later.



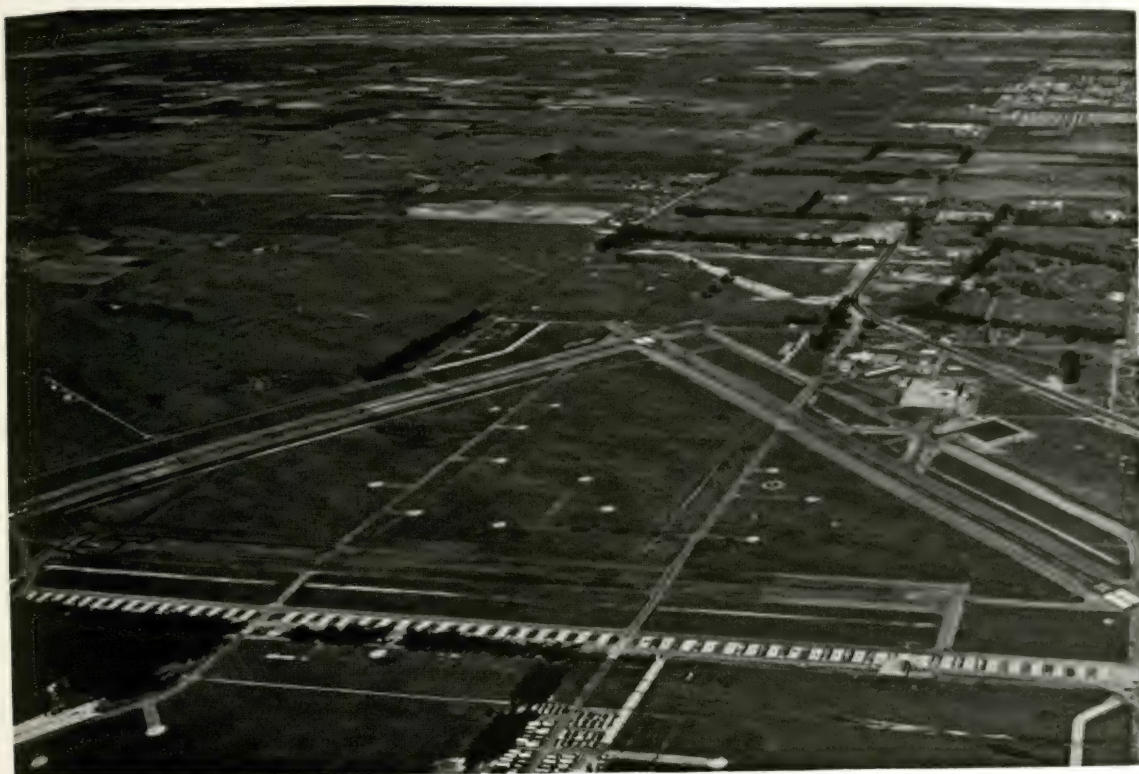


Figure 10-2. 1965 Mark Hurd aerial photograph of the Army Air Base. Some of the original tar paper shacks have been removed as well as some of the original hangars.



Figure 10-3. 1943 lineup of Lockheed P-38 Lightnings at the Army Air Base. Note pilots and barracks visible under the wings in the background.



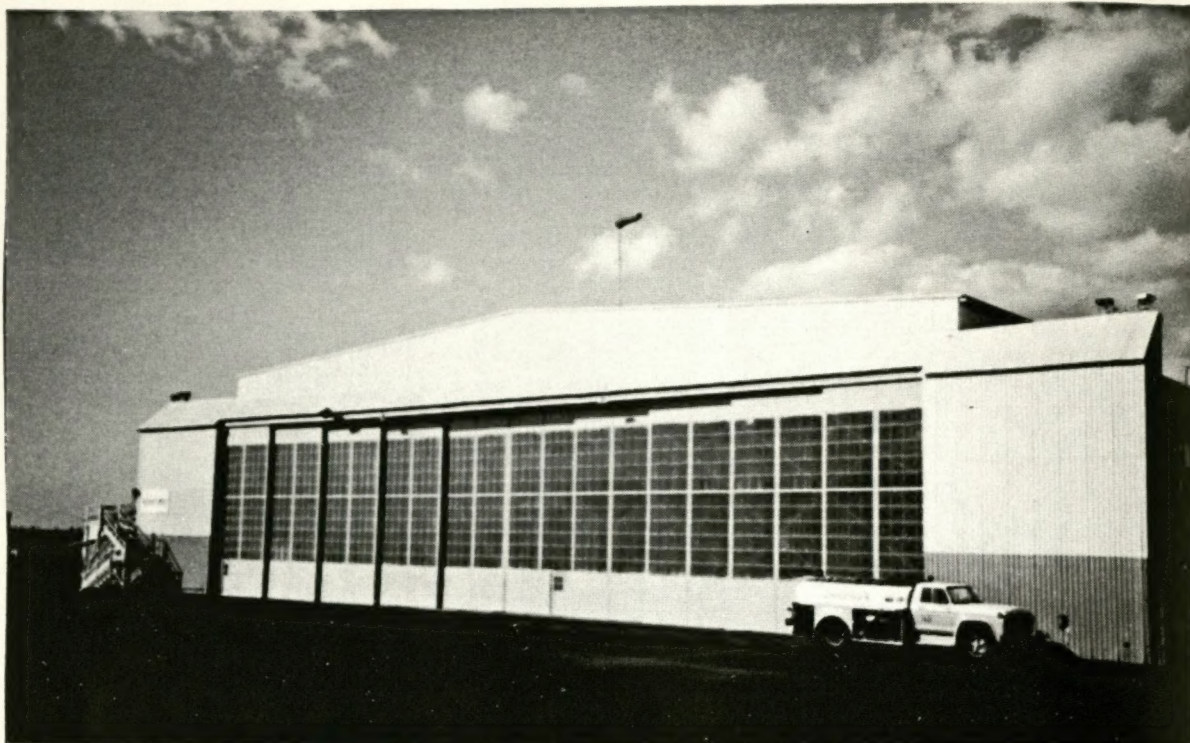


Figure 10-4. 1988 photograph of the main hangar built in 1942 at the present-day Santa Maria Airport.



Figure 10-5. 1988 photograph of one of the few flyable P-38s owned by Lefty Gardner, shown at the Santa Maria Airport beside the original hangar.



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## SOURCES OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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